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THE ROUND



OF LIFE



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THE ROUND OF LIFE.

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DEDICATED TO THE
LADY ALICE DES VŒUX,
BY A. WILDES,
AUTHOR OF "THE LITTLE RIFT."



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THE ROUND OF LIFE.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

"Two children in two neighbour villages
Playing mad pranks along the healthy leas;
Two strangers meeting at a festival;
Two lovers whispering by an orchard wall;
Two lives fast bound in one with golden ease;
Two graves, grass-green, beside a grey Church tower,
Wasted with still rains and daisy-blossomed;
Two children in one hamlet born and bred:
So runs the round of life from hour to hour."—TENNYSON.

"Tell me a story," cries the three year old prattler, as it climbs your knee, and looks wistfully in your face. "Let it be a *real* one," demands an elder child, with grave brown eyes. "No, no, a fairy tale," exclaims a third, as, throwing down its toys, it rushes eagerly towards you.

Now, *how* to satisfy all these is the difficulty, and just such a difficulty arises in the mind of an author in putting forth the creatures of his imagination before the eye of the public. For, although we are accustomed to speak of the Public in the singular number, still we are, when appearing before it, painfully reminded that its tastes are hydra-headed, and its name is Legion. To please all, is an impossibility; to please the majority, is in the hands of those who pander to the prevailing fancy of the day; to please the few, is for those, who, writing from the heart, speak to the heart. But all agree in this. "Tell us a story." A "story" then I'll tell.

CHAPTER II.

——“She lifted up her eyes
And loved him with that love which was her doom.”—ELAINE.

Adelaide Watson was leaning over her father's gate, looking anxiously up the road which led to the Hall, and living over again, in thought, the exciting joys of the previous day, which had been spent there. The Squire's eldest son had then come of age, and the Squire had kept high festival in honour thereof; all his tenantry and neighbours had been his guests, and Adelaide's father counted amongst the former, and was, moreover, one whom Sir Peter Morecombe held in especial respect. They had been boys together, and out of more than one youthful scrape had the sober-minded John Watson extricated the juvenile baronet, and in later years there was no undertaking into which Sir Peter entered, without the preliminary resolution, “I'll see what Watson thinks of it,” and Watson's judgment invariably carried the day.

All the arrangements for the all-important event of the young heir's coming of age had been especially committed to the care of Mr. and Mrs. Watson, and they and their only child, Adelaide, of “sweet seventeen,” had been fully occupied at the Hall for many previous days seeing to the carrying out of what was nominally termed Lady Morecombe's wishes, but which were in reality but smiling acquiescences in whatever Mrs. Watson proposed, and which thereby saved her indolent ladyship from all thought and exertion, though, to do her justice, if she could have roused herself at any time for anybody, it would have been now, and for her darling only son; she had even gone once completely round the house to look at all the preparations, and had just sunk into the repose of her luxurious boudoir, when the sound of wheels

aroused her, and a carriage and four brought her son up the long avenue amidst the cheers of the assembled crowds. The day was brilliant in the extreme, and everyone had come to the Hall with the determination of fully enjoying it, and all carried out that determination to its close. For a detailed description I refer the reader to the "Illustrated News" of that week, as "our own correspondent" gave so good an account, that I feel it would be superfluous for me to attempt a repetition. I will therefore content myself with that which was not mentioned, and invading the sacred enclosure of a human heart, ruthlessly lay it bare before the reader.

Poor Adelaide! she had "played mad pranks along the healthy leas" with Archie Morecombe when children together, but would he remember her again? She had been away at a boarding school, he at College, their times for being at home had not been the same, and years had passed, and they had not seen each other until this eventful day, when they met as "strangers at a festival," not long to remain such, for Archie's quick eye soon espied the prettiest girl in the group round the open door, and although bound in courtesy to greet his own immediate kith and kin there first, he took the earliest opportunity to discover and renew his acquaintance with his early playmate. Holding out his hand, he advanced towards her with a fascinating smile and said, "Miss Watson, for I suppose I must not call you Addy now, allow me to express the pleasure it gives me to see you again. You are so grown, but not the least altered; I should have known you anywhere." He forgot he had been enquiring but a short while before who she was, but it made a pretty introductory speech, and after a few observations on the beauty of the day and the kindness of the people in coming, he withdrew from her side, to utter similar speeches to his numerous acquaintances who thronged the house and gardens. Now and then throughout the day, he would make

some passing observation to her, as he hurried by on some mission to his own particular guests, or else give a smile which seemed to say, "I may neglect you because we are such old friends." Once in the evening he asked her to dance with him, and as he led her to a seat afterwards whispered, "We must often meet again, now that we are both at home once more;" words which are engraven in the heart and ears of poor Adelaide Watson as she leans over her father's gate, and looks anxiously up the road that leads to the Hall. Presently a horseman turns the corner. Adelaide's heart beats quicker, 'tis he! but not alone, a second horseman is seen the next instant at his side, they are trotting fast, they soon reach the gate, one lifts his hat, bows gracefully as he passes, and leaves the girl suffused with blushes. She watches that one rider till the next turn in the road hides him from her view, she watches till each particle of dust his horse's hoofs have raised have again laid dormant in the road. She watches; and thoughts of all the silly love tales her fellow school girls used to tell, and the still more pernicious ones she has read since leaving school, crowd into her mind, and she begins to weave her own romance, herself the heroine. Stealthy meetings, discovery by parents, indignation of the baronet, a runaway match; all these seemed not only feasible, but charming. The school training had done its work well. She saw neither folly nor sin in the life she was planning for herself. All that was pure and modest in her early years, which under a mother's tender care would have ripened into sweet maidenhood, had been crushed out by that mother's vanity, in sending her child to be tutored by strangers at a "finishing boarding school!" And the good sound common sense which man alone can instil into woman, and which Mr. Watson was so well fitted to bestow on his daughter had she been left to daily intercourse with him, was all lost by that giving up of the natural guardians of the child to the training

of paid teachers, far away from all the sweet and gentle influences of home. God gives parents a charge, and they neglect it.

The next day Adelaide suggested to her mother that it would be proper etiquette to call on Lady Morecombe, but Mrs. Watson was busy, and thought next week would be quite time enough. So Adelaide betook herself to her gate to watch for passers by, but none came, at least, none she looked for, and reason good. There was a large party staying at the Hall, and a pic-nic had been planned, and all were gone to it, and amidst all the fun, frolic, and flirting, none were so forward as Archibald Morecombe. Then came reaction on the following morning, indolence, which scarcely roused itself to looking on at a game of billiards, and lounging in the back seat of the carriage for an afternoon drive with the ladies. So the week slipped away and Sunday came, and Adelaide thought, "I shall see him at church, and I shall have my best things on, my new summer bonnet and pretty muslin dress."

Little did good Mr. Watson know the anxiety he caused his daughter, when on Saturday evening he came in to tea, prophesying a wet day on the morrow. But for once in his life Mr. Watson was wrong. No, not he, but his faithful barometer; not that he allowed that *it* could be wrong; no, it had gone down for wind or something, and he had mistaken it for rain. Was there ever so indulged a child as a favourite barometer? Who ever allows it *can* be wrong? Excuses are always found for it.

So the Sunday was fine after all, and the church was full, of at least professing worshippers. But what the sermon was about, Adelaide Watson does not know to this day; and as to the rest of the service, she does know this, that every time she looked up during the Psalms, she caught Archibald Morecombe's eye, and if it had not been for those horrid high pews, she might have seen him when she sat down as well

as when she stood, for the large square enclosures looked every way. So it was easy to arrange one's seat to face which ever quarter of the globe (or of the church), that chanced for the time being to be attractive. The blessing pronounced, out rushed the congregation from their seats, and soon gathered in gossiping knots in the churchyard, regardless of the sanctity of the spot. Some few were waiting for their carriages; but the majority had their's in readiness, the loss of half the sermon to their departing coachmen having been but a minor consideration.

Archibald having assisted in packing two carriage loads of ladies, turned back to the pathway where the Watson's were slowly emerging into the road, and shook hands with all three in a most friendly manner, walked a few paces with the father, talking of the crops; then, addressing the mother, hoped she had not suffered from all her exertions on the memorable day, it was *so* kind of her to do all she did, the success of the day had really been mainly attributable to her, and so on. Then, looking full into Adelaide's eyes, he said with a smile and slow shake of the head, "Sha'nt ask how *you* are after it all, for young ladies are never the worse for a dance, are they?"

"Oh, no, all the better," said Adelaide, laughing.

"The better? but," added Archie in a lower tone, "you could not have *looked better* than you did." Holding out his hand, he gave hers a lingering pressure, and ran back to his companions, whose jest at the expense of the farmer's pretty daughter was echoed by his light laughter, and the party strolled back across the fields to the Hall, to a wasted afternoon.

The bells were chiming for the afternoon service, when a gentle hand opened the garden door, and Lilia Bertram descended the steps, crossed the lawn, passed over the bridge that divided it from the park, and after traversing it for about half a mile, emerged

into a narrow lane that soon brought her to the church. Pausing a moment under the Lich-gate, her thoughts were with the dead; raising her eyes to the Cross that surmounted it, her thoughts were with the living. "*He* died; *He* ever liveth," she murmured, and as a bright tear fell upon her cheek, she mentally added, "and he too, my dear, dear father, is not dead, but sleepeth."

"God's finger touched him and he slept."

CHAPTER III.

"No angel, but a dearer being, all dipt
In angel instincts, breathing Paradise,
Interpreter between the Gods and men,
Who looked all native to her place, and yet
On tip-toe seemed to touch upon a sphere
Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce
Swayed to her from their orbits as they moved,
And girdled her with music."—PRINCESS.

And who was Lilia Bertram? And who that father she still mourned for, though more than two years have passed since she stood by his open grave? Ample time to forget our dead ones; so think the generality of human beings. No sooner does the green sod cover them, or the crushing weight of the family vault's memorial lid fall heavily down, than it seems as if it were almost a sin even to *speak* of them. They are then only to be vaguely alluded to, or mournfully apostrophised as "poor" so and so; everything belonging to them is carefully hidden from sight, and it appears to become the aim and object of the survivors to obliterate their very existence from all memories. I do not say this is always the case, but

alas! too often we find it such, even amongst those who profess to believe in the "Communion of Saints." Not so was it with Lilia Bertram and her widowed mother. With them it was as if *his* spirit ruled now, even more than then, when his bodily presence moved amongst them; the change was but from "what would you wish," to "what would *he have wished*;" and though saddened by that fearful blank, no answer, yet it was with no morbid feeling that wife and daughter thought, spoke and referred to the loved one, who had joined that company, of whom it has been so beautifully said,

"They do not die,
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
Nor change to us, although they change."

Thus felt Mrs. Bertram and the gentle Lilia, and when the invitation to Morecombe Hall arrived at Fernley Cottage, for the latter to be present at her cousin's "coming of age," the mother's first thought was, "Your father would like you to go to his sister's for it, and he was always fond of Archie." So Lilia went for the gay doings, though the pleasure was sorely damped by the parting with her mother, from whom she had scarcely ever been separated, even for a day. But why did not her mother go with her? That was just the very question that crossed the minds of several persons, but Lady Morecombe did not say to them, no, nor hardly to herself, that she disliked the thought of her brother's widow coming to the house at a time when she wished everything to be joyous and bright, especially as she heard that Mrs. Bertram still wore her widow's dress, and was therefore, *she supposed*, dull and mournful in accordance with it. Besides, Lady Morecombe did not like to be reminded of her brother's death. There was but a year's difference in their ages, and she said it made her so nervous to think of him; had he been killed in battle it would have been quite different; but to live

through so many engagements, and then to die at home, why, it was a thing that might happen to— to anyone, it really was not a pleasant thing at all to think about, and the way his widow would still talk about him, made her feel herself quite justified in not having extended the invitation beyond her niece, but Lady Morecombe need not have feared the presence of her sister, there were few, if any, of her visitors who would have been found more cheerful, few, who would so entirely have ignored self, to add to the joy and comfort of others.

Whatever resemblance there might have been in early youth between Lady Morecombe and her brother, life's training had indeed all but eradicated. The exceeding gentleness, which had been the especial characteristic of both, had, by the early marriage of the one with a weak-minded man, dwindled into selfish indolence; in the other, the battles of life at a public school, and the necessity of self-reliance in many posts of trust and danger during his military career, had ripened the gentleness of Colonel Bertram into quiet firmness, resulting from calm deliberation and the echo to all that was good, which he ever found in his loving, sensible wife.

Such were the parents of our Lilia, who is now, book in hand, making her way through the flower garden to that inviting looking seat under the beech trees yonder; but a peacock has taken possession of the spot; he looks proudly and indignantly at her. She apologises for thus interrupting him, and holds out her hand invitingly. He rejects all overtures to peace, spreads his wings, and after a clumsy flight, wheels down on the parapet of an adjoining terrace, poises himself for a moment, then spreading out his gorgeous tail, turns round and with a defiant look eyes his disturber. Lilia settles herself as usurper on the vacant throne, opens her book, and is soon deep in its pages, when, lo! an intruder appears before her, and the disturber becomes the disturbed.

Did a gleam of satisfaction appear in the peacock's eyes? Are birds capable of lowering themselves to human feelings of revenge? We know not; but will take the earliest opportunity of enquiring of Buckland, the very first time we have the pleasure of meeting him. We authors are not so presumptuous as to imagine we can divine the feelings of animals, we only content ourselves with those of our own species, and thus it is that we know perfectly well what is passing through the mind of Archie Morecombe, as he approaches his cousin.

"How nicely Lilia looks this morning. I declare if it were anyone else I should go up and tell her nothing could be prettier than her present dress and attitude, bending over her book, and those trees as a background—quite a study for an artist; but, dear me, as to my saying such a thing to Lilia, I should as soon think of flying. I don't know how it is, I can get on with most girls, but somehow I feel half afraid of her; never *can* make a pretty speech to her; never manage the least bit of a flirtation. I wonder why? I fancy it would soon become a *real* thing with her, everything seems so real and full of meaning about her. I never feel like the same being with her as with anyone else; even now as I approach her my heart seems to put out feelers, like an insect with its antennæ, when nearing some suspicious object. What does it mean? Are our destinies to be the same, our fates to be linked, or to be violently antagonistic? I am sure these sensations portend something. Is she to have an influence over me—rubbish, I ought to have it over her. I'll go and chaff her about that book she is reading. I did not waste *all* my time at college, so am rather more up in literature than all those noodles who have been hanging about here since that ridiculous day when I was made such a fool of, merely because I happened to survive teething and measles, and lived to be twenty-one."

"Lilia," he exclaimed as he now stood before her,

"did you ever hear of those German fairies, who after visiting England went home and died of risible dropsy."

"No indeed," said Lilia laughing, "what an absurd story, not over complimentary to us English, and really I don't see why the Germans should find so much to laugh at in us, besides if I had been of the party, I am sure I should just have laughed at the time, not waited to get home before I expressed my feelings."

"No that would have been rude, and the Germans are a very polite nation, so whatever struck them as absurd, they suppressed their sense of it, till safe beyond all chance of its being known by those who caused it."

"And death was the consequence," said Lilia, "that makes it rather a sad story."

"Well then shall we give it another ending? Let me see. Oh I know how *you* would have acted."

"How?"

"Shall I tell you?"

"Yes. Do."

"Everytime you saw anything to disapprove of you would have put on a very sad face, and you would have said 'My dear English brothers and sisters, pray do not repeat such an act as this, it is foolish in the extreme; you lose the good opinion of others and your own self-respect.'"

The words, the tone of this speech brought the colour painfully into the listener's cheeks, she but too well recognised her own being thus mimicked, and the first moment a feeling of anger arose in her mind, but instantly subduing it, she said, gently,

"Archie, you mean that as a reproof to me, I will accept it as such, and try for the future not to arrogate the post of teacher so often."

"Dear Lily," exclaimed her cousin warmly, "I did not mean to pain you, and I know I have; do forgive

me. Oh! if only you knew how much I valued your teaching, you would lecture me every day."

"It would be the same lecture repeated every day, I think," said Lilia trying to smile.

"I know what you are thinking of," and Archie's tone and manner softened into a grave and almost solemn one as he continued "You are thinking of yesterday, when we all laughed at you for slipping away from us to go to church by yourself in the afternoon. I assure you, I quite hated myself for it afterwards, and actually came out here this morning with the express purpose of telling you so, and of asking you to let me know another time, and I will go with you; it really would be such a pleasure to me to have the quiet walk with you. Now I know what you are going to say; I can read the reproof in your eyes, before it come from your lips. Don't smile, I am quite serious now, only I can't be good all at once, and if I begin to go to church for the pleasure of a walk with you, the better feeling may come afterwards."

A reproving "lecture" for this speech rose in Lilia's mind, but she hesitated, and doubted if it were wise just then to give vent to it, and her cousin began to feel somewhat elated with the notion that he had silenced her and rather gained the day, a hope came over him that the expressions of pleasure for being with her had not been altogether displeasing to the recipient of them; he thought he had inserted the edge of his object and might now drive it further into that heart he was so desirous of invading. Seating himself by his cousin's side, he asked "Did you not have a letter from my aunt this morning, I thought I saw a black edged one in the letter bag for you. I hope she is well, and not going to be selfish and send for you yet?"

"Mamma is never selfish," said Lilia, smiling, "and she tells me she is very well, which I made her her promise to put into her letters, because I knew if

she did not that then she would be ill. You know we have scarcely ever been parted, and I thought this was the best plan. I knew she would tell me the exact truth, and if she writes she is well then I am content, but if she omitted to write it, then I should fear she was ill, and should rush away home directly."

A prettily worded speech of fervent good wishes for the health of Mrs. Bertram was at once on the lips of her nephew, but something seemed to stop them there, and he felt he could not utter them. He had said more that morning than ever before, and yet how different had it been to the customary flippant style in which he was wont to address the softer sex. His good looks, still more, his fascinating manners, made him a general favourite amongst those who looked not beyond the surface and were satisfied with the amusement of the hour, and although Archibald Morecombe was not altogether deficient in talent, or in some degree of common sense, yet he rarely chose to trouble himself to the exertion of employing either. "What's the good of it?" he would sometimes ask himself, "the world wags on very well with me as it is." But with his cousin, as we have seen, things were different, he rarely indulged in the smallest approach to flattery, never to actual nonsense, he would watch her expressive mouth, which was the one great beauty of her countenance, and when he saw the scornful lip curl, his silly speeches dissolved into their original nothingness, and at times he would feel ashamed of himself for having even *thought* them. But all was different this morning, and when the gong sounded to bring them in to luncheon, he accompanied his cousin to the house with a satisfied sensation pervading him that they had spent a decidedly pleasant morning together. A new kind of feeling was creeping over him; he wanted to be alone. He went into the stable yard, ordered his horse, rode out of the back gate without saying a word of his intentions to anyone. Slowly he proceeded down the lane, but

had not gone far before he suddenly reined up his horse, turned quickly round, and pushing open a gate, cantered across the green turf, field after field in an opposite direction. "Little fool," he muttered, "I believe I did say I would come and have a chat with her this evening, but she'll look a long time over her father's gate, before she sees me again. I wish I had gone to church with Lilia yesterday, instead of making such a simpleton of myself as I did with that pretty little Addy; but she certainly *is* pretty, and it gave her a great deal of pleasure, so that after all I don't know that I need blame myself so much."

Such were the reflections of the one cousin, and what were those of the other, as she sat in the window seat of her room, a piece of untouched work lying in her lap, and even her mother's letter unanswered by her side? "Archie was very pleasant to-day; how kindly he spoke of dear papa, and told all that he remembered of him, and the nice letter he wrote him when he went first to college. How charming a college life must be! I am sure Archie's description was delightful. Such opportunities of acquiring knowledge from men and books. Well, I really must write to mamma, I can't think how it is, I have been idling away this afternoon sadly? I suppose it's the heat, but this room is deliciously cool, and the sun quite gone behind the trees; what a perfect shade they made this morning. Oh! are those the rooks coming home already? surely it can't be so late! Oh, no, it's the pigeons from the yard taking a flight round the park. How odd it is that Archie still makes pets of them just as he used to do as a boy, but he is very gentle for a man. I hope I was not dictatorial to him, it was quite right of him to give me that little reproof. I must tell mamma about that, and let her see I am not being "spoilt," as she says she is afraid I shall be here. Now I really *will* begin my letter to her. I know there is something in it that requires an immediate answer, but I quite forget what it was.

I must read the letter over again first; how nicely dear mamma writes, so much better than I ever shall, but all my pens are so bad. Archie said he would mend me some, but I daresay he won't think of it again."

And thus the young girl's thoughts rambled on, until the striking of a clock reminded her it was nearly time for her to pay her customary visit to her aunt in her boudoir, for she always liked to have her niece with her for a chat over their afternoon tea; so it came to pass, Mrs. Bertram had a shorter letter than usual from her daughter, and felt at first a little disappointed, but the next moment called herself a selfish mother to expect always to have long letters, when no doubt Lilia's time was fully occupied, a large party of young people in the house, and a great deal going on. It was very good of her to have written such long letters as she had done, entering into descriptions of people and places just as her dear father did.

CHAPTER IV.

"It seems to me
'Tis only noble to be good
Kind hearts are more than coronets."—TENNYSON.

The summer days flew lightly by, and the guests at Morecombe Hall, like summer birds, one after another took their departure, only Lilia remained, her aunt had found her too agreeable a companion to be readily parted with, and whenever a day was named for her leaving, something was certain to occur to prevent her going. It was not Lady Morecombe

alone who thus put hindrances in the way to prevent Mrs. Bertram from regaining her daughter, her son had as full, though not so visible, a share in the diplomacy which retained her. So long as the house was full of visitors it was easy to plan pic-nics, riding parties, aquatic excursions, in which all could join, and in which Lilia must of necessity participate, but as the members decreased, the excuses became more difficult to discover, and when finally left the only one of all the guests, matters required some ingenuity of invention to be displayed, and it was curious to observe the genius which discovered necessary causes for delay. Never before had Archie found so many picturesque views and ruins to show his cousin, so many new songs, which she alone could teach him. Then, did not his mother think Lilia ought to go one day to see old Lord Borthwick, he had been such a great friend of their grandfather, and would feel hurt at Lilia's leaving the county without seeing him; and that would be quite a two day's journey, as the distance was too great for them to do otherwise than dine and sleep there, so a day was to be fixed for this excursion, and from one cause and another it took some time before it was quite convenient for all parties to arrange the meeting. In the interval, the young cousins found plenty to amuse and interest themselves in, and Archie not only remembered to mend Lilia's pen's every day ready for her use, but to do many other little useful things to please her, and above all, never failed now to accompany her each Sunday afternoon to church, and Lilia ceased to lecture, for her slightest wish seemed to have become the law of action to her cousin, and the time passed on without a disturbing wind to ruffle its surface even. One day a planned excursion was put a stop to by a summer shower; Archie had tried to call it nothing, but his mother would not venture herself, nor allow Lilia to go out, when the smallest chance of a storm was portending, so Archie grumbled, and was "out

of sorts" all the afternoon, and when late in the evening a lovely moon rose, and lit up every pendent rain-drop with almost a diamond's lustre, he vainly endeavoured to persuade Lilia to slip out just for a moment and look at them.

"Here's my great-coat hanging in the hall, I'll wrap that quite round you, and then you *can* take no cold."

"No, I don't think I should," replied Lilia, "but aunt said she did not wish me to go out."

Archie was on the point of saying "Oh, never mind her wishes, do come," but he checked himself, and only substituted "I shall ask her for permission for you, will you come then?"

"Oh yes, certainly, but I'll go and ask her myself," and off ran Lilia, but soon returned with a slower step, saying, "No Archie, I cannot come; poor aunt talked of papa, and said his illness was all brought on from a cold, and she could not have my death laid at her door, and she seemed so nervous, I think the storm has upset her to-day, so I promised I would come back directly and sit with her."

"And you won't do even such a little thing as *this* to please me," said Archie with the air of an injured being; "I thought you always professed to be an admirer of the beauties of nature, and would have enjoyed coming out this evening, but if you prefer sitting upstairs with my mother, of course you do as you like, and I shall go and smoke my cigar out there alone;" and so, giving utterance to this most ungracious and untrue speech, he took himself off, leaving poor Lilia standing in the hall, tears of vexation and sorrow starting to her eyes. Forcing them back, she ran quickly upstairs, and passed the rest of the evening in her aunt's room.

When Archie returned to the house, he found his father alone, trying to decipher a rather badly written letter by the light of the lamp; he looked up as his

son entered and said, "Oh, come here, your eyes are younger than mine, I can't make out what this fellow means, he is the plague of my life, I wish I could get rid of him."

"Then why don't you?" asked the son in a not over-amiable tone.

"Oh, it would be easy enough to get rid of him if only I could get someone to take his place, and that's just what I have been thinking about, and, if only Watson would, then I should be quite comfortable."

"Then why don't you get Watson?" drawled out Archie, as he took the letter from his father's hands.

"Why? because, you see—humph"—and Sir Peter hesitated for a moment, and then said, "Your mother seems to have some sort of prejudice against him. I can't think why, for I have known him all my life, and I don't care who says anything to the contrary, but a more true *noble* man never existed, he may not have what is called noble birth, but I know this, I only wish half of those who have were blessed with but an atom of his good sense and kind feelings, and I am sure if only he knew the bother I am in now, he would help me out of it, only, really I have hardly the effrontery to go and ask him."

"Shall I, for you?" enquired the son, suddenly aroused to apparently a better frame of mind than he had been indulging in during the greater part of the day.

"You might just hint at it in some way, perhaps; it would come better from you I think, than if I were to make a point of it by going down and asking him myself. Could you not make some excuse to go and see him to-morrow morning early, before he goes off round the farm. Did you not want to see him about that colt you thought might be trained to carry Lilia some day?"

Archie winced as his father uttered the last few words, they did not accord with the *injured* feelings

he was nursing up against his cousin, he was silent for some time, then returning the letter to his father, said, "I'll go the first thing after breakfast to-morrow morning, and feel my way with Watson about the matter; I suppose if he would take the whole thing off your hands, you would not object. There would be a good deal to see about in checking accounts, but he might keep a clerk to do all that if you made it worth his while, the only fear I have is that he would not care about the *pay* of the thing, and would only undertake the responsibility as a benefit conferred on you. And one would not like to be under an obligation to him."

"No, there's the difficulty with such a man as he is, any ordinary person you can repay in some way or other, but I always feel he is above all remuneration that I can offer him. What do you think of a little civility to the girl, eh? Lilia said she seemed really very pleasant the day she and her mother called here, so fond of flowers. Lilia took her round the gardens, perhaps we might ask her up to luncheon some day to see the—the—oh, something or other. Women can always find out an excuse for that sort of thing, and she and her mother were so kind and useful that day, getting everything seen to, and saving your mother all the trouble, for really that old housekeeper of our's is past her work now, and only makes a bother of everything she undertakes, and yet one can't discharge her, it would break her heart. Well, but about the Watsons, you'll see him to-morrow then and try what can be done."

Accordingly on the morrow Archie betook himself off to Grassmead Farm, and that without a word to his cousin respecting any plans for the day, which had always hitherto been his custom. Lilia was wondering when he would come into the drawing room that morning, but he came not, and hour after hour passed on and the luncheon was announced, but

no Archie appeared. She began to fancy he had been more than usually silent that morning during breakfast, but she did not think very much about it, as she knew her uncle disliked talking when he read the news paper, which he always did during that meal; still, one thought would steal painfully over her as she recalled her cousin's last words to her on the previous evening, and she *felt* there was rather a cold constrained manner in his morning greeting, unlike the bright smile which had ever been her welcome. The lunch was nearly over when Lady Morecombe observed Archie was a long time gone, and enquired of her husband if he were going anywhere beside Mr. Watson's. Lilia looked up, and a strange sort of feeling came over her. After a few moments, her uncle said deliberately, "No, I think not," and then looking at Lilia with a smile said, "He must be *exercising* that colt for you, I think, not looking at it only? Why did you not go with him to see it? But perhaps I am letting out a secret, I am always a bad hand at keeping one." And Sir Peter was also a bad hand at telling an untruth, and he felt rather uncomfortable in giving vent to this sort of half-truth, and the thought of it worried him a good deal throughout the day. Lady Morecombe had also her little worries, she did not like to think her son was stopping so long at "those Watsons." And Lilia,—what was she thinking about? Her gentle spirit was upbraiding her with having indulged in harsh thoughts of her cousin. "And all the while he has been thinking of doing me a kindness, and gone to see about that colt for me, how kind of him. I know he asked me if I would like to have it, but I did not suppose he would go and see about it himself for me; and he was vexed with me last night; how kind and forgiving of him, and I was misjudging him all this morning."

Was she?

CHAPTER V.

"Sorrow is the 'toga virilis' of the soul. He or she who has never seen face to face that stern soberer, Death, knows but little of life and its aims."—LAVINIA.

Archibald Morecombe had successfully performed his mission to Mr. Watson, but instead of returning at once with the intelligence to his father, he lingered away the morning in idle gossiping with Mrs. Watson, and silly frivolities with the daughter, to whom he did not forget to deliver the invitation to lunch the next day at the Hall, when he had determined in his own mind to make use of her to provoke, as he hoped, his cousin into jealousy, for he had not forgotten or forgiven her for refusing to accompany him into the garden on the previous evening, not that he thought (so he said to himself) so much of the action, but he felt it betokened a want in that consideration for him, which he had begun to hope he had kindled in the heart of his cousin, and, smarting with pique, he had gladly availed himself of the visit to Mr. Watson, in order to soothe his vanity with the ever ready attentions of his daughter. Satiated with these, he flung himself on his horse, and rode he cared not where, ill at ease with himself and everyone else, till late in the afternoon he returned home, and entering his father's room, informed him of the ready kindness with which Mr. Watson had entered into the vexations of his friend, and promised all that lay in his power to relieve him from them, adding with a delicacy which removed the sense of obligation from the mind of Sir Peter, that far from being the smallest trouble to him, he was so fond of accounts, it would be quite an amusement to him; he really wanted a little occupation sometimes in the evening. As Archibald quitted his father he met his mother and cousin

in the hall, just returned from their afternoon drive; the former passed him with a smile and trifling observation, and retired to her room to rest before the arduous undertaking of dressing for dinner; the latter looking up into her cousin's face said, "Archie, will you come out in the garden with me? It's *my* turn to ask you now, so don't refuse me as I did you last evening. You know I may not do wrong, *even to please you*." The smile that accompanied the last words, thrilled the heart of the listener. All his folly and ill humour vanished in an instant, and he despised himself for ever having allowed any disloyalty in his allegiance to her who now stood up before him, clad in her immeasurable superiority over all others.

The next morning it was with intense satisfaction Archie beheld what is commonly termed "a regular down pour," for more than once had the thought of Adelaide Watson's appearance at lunch conveyed feelings of intense annoyance to him. "What a fool I am" he would exclaim to himself, and add, "but it shan't occur again." But of what avail were such resolutions as these, which proceeded from no fixed principle, but the mere vagaries of the moment. When Lady Morecombe made her appearance late in the morning, for she never breakfasted with her family, she announced that she had at last made all necessary arrangements for the proposed visit to Lord Borthwick, and added with a smile, "He writes as if I were Her Majesty almost, coming to visit him, it is quite absurd, and really it would have saved me so much trouble if he would have settled it all himself and not left it to me."

"I thought his sister lived with him," said Sir Peter, "Why did not she do all the writing business, or else his son, what does he do with himself?"

"That is what all the trouble has been about, his sister was from home at one time, and his son at the other, and Lord Borthwick was anxious both should

be there when our visit came off, and has therefore now written to say next Wednesday will suit all parties very well, so we will drive over there to dinner, and return on Thursday."

"A great deal of fuss for a very little good I think," grumbled out Sir Peter, who never liked the exertion necessary to the undertaking of these sorts of expeditions, and his wife's indolence had always encouraged him in the feeling, but this was a special occurrence, Lord Borthwick was an old friend of Lady Morecombe's family, and she was anxious he should see and know her niece, and keep up the interest in her, which might otherwise die out with the present generation, besides, Lord Borthwick's courteous manners, and especial devotion to the fair sex, were by no means unacceptable to Lady Morecombe; and therefore on that very particular Wednesday afternoon our party left Morecombe Hall for the seat of the Baron Borthwick, and at the seat of the Baron Borthwick did they duly arrive. A turn in the park suddenly brought the handsome old Gothic mansion full in view.

"Oh, how lovely!" exclaimed Lilia, and turning instinctively to her cousin, she said, "You never prepared me for this."

"No," he replied, "I waited for the surprise, I felt sure it was just the place you would admire."

"Well, there's the young heir to it all at liberty, I believe," said Sir Peter, looking across the carriage and laughing at his niece, "What do you say to being Mrs. McDonald?"

Lady Morecombe gave her husband a reproving glance, she had her own private reasons for not desiring that idea to be made a joke of. She knew it had ill effects, and she had been secretly planning this visit, to one particular ultimate end of her own.

As the carriage proceeded up the avenue of magnificent old trees, Lilia amused herself with imagining

what the interior of the house must be, that possessed so attractive an exterior, and with a mind full of all the glories of the fourteenth century, Lilia entered the mansion of "Nuushorton." The hall pannelled with blackest oak, the dark mysterious staircase winding away as to unknown regions in the far distance, uncouth faces grinning or scowling from the walls, all struck her with a feeling of awe, which strangely contrasted with the gaily attired footmen who ushered the party in. And what was the shock to her pre-arranged sensations, when a large door being thrown open, she found herself in a bright drawing room, begirt with all the latest fashions from the great metropolis. The *most* ancient of the adornments being the Renaissance wreathing on the ceiling, which had been left untouched since the occupant of that age had so bedaubed it, and destroyed the really lovely and original designs which had been spared when the ruthless Henry robbed the pious possessors of their peaceful home, and gave it to his worthless favourites. And did not the ghosts of the nuns of "Nunshorton" haunt and torment those sinful revelers? No, for they were too gentle for revenge, and of late years the ghosts had had it pretty much to themselves, for Lord Borthwick rarely visited the house of his ancestors, greatly preferring his London residence, and the society and amusements of town to the quieter ones of the country. He had married late in life, apparently with but little affection for the lady he selected, but only, as he told his intimate friends, from a sense of duty, to keep up the title. Consequently he was satisfied with the birth of a son, although it cost him the life of the mother. Lord Borthwick immediately went abroad, and the child was committed to the care of a maiden aunt, whose grief at the death of her sister, seemed to find relief only in bestowing all her love and care on her little forlorn nephew. From henceforth Nunshorton

became her home, and her youthful charge grew up to manhood with scarce the knowledge of a mother's loss, so faithful to her trust had proved the substitute. When Lord Borthwick after some years revisited Nunshorton, and aunt Rhoda dragged a somewhat unwilling boy into the room and told him to go and speak to papa, the said papa gazed at him through his eye-glass, and abstractedly remarked, "How strange it is that children will persist in having a predilection in favour of the plainest parent. There's nothing of the MacDonald about him." As time passed on, and reports of the talents of young MacDonald at school and college reached his father's ears, a feeling of pride arose in the heart that seemed closed to love, and he began to take more notice of his son, especially as the vacations occurred just at the time that the father was thankful for something to interest and amuse him whilst "London out of town" had driven him to his country residence. Although Lord Borthwick was becoming too old to enjoy field sports as formerly, still, mounted on a steady cob he would delight in seeing his son on a spirited hunter, daringly take each hedge and ditch that came in his way; or, gun in hand, sally forth on a bright autumnal morning, and bring home the heaviest bag of all the party. Once, when drawing his father's attention to the beauty of a favourite retriever, their hands met on the dog's head, and Lord Borthwick said with a smile, "Why, I declare boy, there *is* one resemblance between us, the shape of your hand is exactly mine, lucky for you, as really I have sometimes feared there might be a doubt of your parentage," and he laughed lightly as he spoke; then assuming a graver manner, said, "I hope you take some care of those hands, their shape is good, but you are letting them get a bad colour, and—let me feel them—ah, yes, rough I declare, pray don't get plough-boyish in your appearance. There is

terribly much of the cub about you still, but I do hope you will get licked into shape some day."

Lectures such as these, of the Lord Chesterfield stamp, did MacDonald receive from his parent, who thereby considered himself fully to perform his duty to him; but as to any precept or example of a higher tone, MacDonald might as well have been brought up the son of a heathen, as the mere professing christian that his father was. As a jest, morality might be sometimes alluded to, — religion, never. True, when the weather was fine, and he had no gout, Lord Borthwick might be seen in the high crimson cushioned pew on a Sunday morning, because it was a right thing to do, for *the sake of example*. I fear few of us are properly grateful to those who thus inconvenience themselves for the benefit of *our* souls.

After this long digression, we must now introduce Lord Borthwick, in "*propria persona*" to our readers. He was not in the drawing room when our party were ushered into it, although the servants evidently thought so, from the way in which the porter had announced their names, to be passed on from one man to another, as if they were still in — square; but they were finally ushered into an empty room, and had, as we have seen, time to perceive the striking contrast it presented to the exterior of the house and the entrance hall. Lady Morecombe sank at once into a luxurious seat, giving vent to expressions of intense fatigue. Sir Peter walked towards the windows, saying "What pokey little holes to look out at!"

"But what a lovely view when you *do* look out," remarked his son."

Lilia said nothing, the splendour of the room seemed to dazzle her senses, and she almost longed to rush back into the sombre hall and recover them, when a door at the further end of the room opened, and, "airing a snowy hand and signet gem," Lord Borthwick gracefully entered and welcomed his guests,

with a courteous word for all. Lady Morecombe *must* be so tired with such a long drive, it was most kind of her to come. Then to Sir Peter, as he laid his hand gently on his shoulder, "Why man, how long is it since we met? It really does seem strange we have not managed to see each other for so long a time; but I really do think we idle men always seem fuller of engagements than our busy brethren. But my "Cinderella" as I call her, was from home, and so I have only had a bachelor set of friends here lately, and now she is returned I have the felicity of seeing ladies in the house again." As he uttered the last few words he turned towards Lilia, and with all the air and manner of a young man, commenced a lively conversation with her, which was only interrupted by the entrance of aunt Rhoda, clad in brown silk, somewhat short and scanty for the fashion, her bonnet simply tied down with a piece of dark blue ribbon, the fastening of her cloak which should have been under her chin, but *was* on her shoulder, looking rather heated and nervous, did aunt Rhoda enter the room.

"I am so sorry" she began, "not to have been in when you arrived, you must have thought me so rude, but William told me he did not expect you before dinner time." (William winced, for his politeness had forbidden *his* mentioning it.) "And" continued the distressed and excited lady, "I quite hoped to be at home and ready to receive you long before you would arrive, in fact I would not have gone out at all, only I heard of an accident down in the village, and went to see about it; it is that poor man Wilkins" continued aunt Rhoda, turning to her brother as she spoke, "it is so sad, he has only just recovered from breaking his arm, and now he has injured his leg so much they do not think he can go to work again for weeks."

"Very odd" said Lord Borthwick in the most

indifferent of tones, "very odd how that class do tumble about and injure themselves—sheer awkwardness I imagine."

A desultory kind of conversation ensued, until interrupted by the sound of wheels. Lord Borthwick started and walked hastily towards the window. "That's my boy come at last," and he stood for a few moments watching for him, but the carriage, instead of approaching the entrance of the house, evidently turned off in another direction.

"Is that another of his new-fashioned notions?" enquired Lord Borthwick, turning with a vexed air towards aunt Rhoda, who innocently asked, "What? William," and he continued in the same tone, "Going round to the back door instead of arriving like any other gentleman at the proper place." Then half ashamed of what he had said, he turned towards Archie, and with a constrained laugh said, "I hope *you* do not indulge in the fashion now arising among some young men, I mean that of levelling classes, and going about the world as if you were desirous of being placed on a par with the lowest."

"I plead guilty to wearing a shooting jacket about in the morning, or even a 'suit of dittos'" said Archie, laughing, "if that is one of the crimes you are alluding to, I know it dreadfully shocks the propriety of some of the *old school*."

"No, no, now that's too bad, everything in moderation, I'm a Liberal Conservative you know, not a bigotted old Tory. But to my mind, the rising generation are getting fearfully Radical in their *dress* at all events, they are born gentlemen and they try their hardest to look as if they belonged to a lower station in life than that in which they were born, and I don't call that doing one's duty."

"Certainly not," said Sir Peter, laughing, "if we are to believe what was taught us in our catechism," and he quoted the passage, unmindful of the irreve-

rence, and caring only to raise a smile and amuse his hearers.

If the "*fear* of man bringeth a snare," verily the love of man, or of *pleasing man*, is tenfold more ensnaring. How often are we led into saying, if not doing, things that we know to be wrong, merely for the gratification which we feel it will produce in the minds of those who "make a mock at sin." We say we "mean no harm," but surely when we indulge in "Bible riddles" and jests at things sacred, we do mentally as Uzzah did bodily, and commit the sin for which he died.

After a lapse of a few moments, MacDonald not making his appearance, his father impatiently rang the bell and enquired of the servant if his son were not returned home.

"No, my Lord, the dog cart returned empty, and Howard wishes to know if he is to go to the station again, to meet the next train."

"Of course, go to every one till his master comes. When is the next due?"

"At 11.57 my Lord."

"Humph! might as well say midnight; well, tell Howard to be there in time."

And the servant turned to leave the room, when aunt Rhoda, who had been listening with an anxious countenance, started up and stopped the man, saying, "There was no accident, was there? Did you ask Howard, you are sure there was none? just find that out, and let me know, and mind plenty of wraps are put into the dog cart; poor fellow, so miserable, arriving in the middle of the night, when we are all comfortable in bed,—not that I shall go to bed till I know he is safe at home," she added in an undertone to herself.

At eight o'clock a large party assembled to dinner at Nunshorton, and the absence of MacDonald seemed forgotten by all, save poor aunt Rhoda, she looked

nervous and uneasy, made totally inapplicable answers to observations made her, her eyes were ever wandering to the door, and she started whenever a servant entered. Only once she looked calm and comfortable, when Lilia, slipping away from a group of young people, came gently up to her, and talked her into the supposition that some unforeseen engagement in London had delayed her nephew's arrival, that no doubt he was quite safe and well, and would arrive to-morrow. Night came, and the party broke up and retired to their rooms and to rest,—all but one. She knew to a minute the time the dog cart would take to return from the station, and eagerly watched for the hands of her clock to point a quarter to two. The little bell struck three times, and wheels were heard entering the yard. Throwing a shawl over her head, aunt Rhoda crept noiselessly down the back stairs, to learn—her nephew had *not* arrived!

CHAPTER VI.

"'Tis first the good, and then the beautiful—

Not, first the beautiful and then the good :

First the rough seed sown in the rougher soil,

Then the flower-blossom, or the branching wood."—

BONAR.

The next morning Aunt Rhoda's eyes were gladdened by the sight of her nephew's handwriting on the breakfast table, and a gentle "Thank God" was whispered in her heart ; but the hands yet trembled as they tore open the envelope and disclosed the contents. A few brief lines, saying he could not possibly be down that day as intended ; he would explain when they met—no time for more, he almost feared he was too late even then to save the morning post.

"Well, what does the truant say?" laughingly asked his father, and on being made acquainted with his son's letter, continued in the same tone, "Explain all, does he say. Young men don't usually *explain all* their reasons for not turning up when expected, eh Morecombe! I know *I should* have found it at times extremely awkward to explain all my reasons for having kept in town when I was a young man, and I suspect times are not changed since then."

The morning was spent in examining the curiosities of the old house, and Lilia was horrified to perceive, placed here and there as ornaments, unmistakeable portions of altar rails and church fittings, with beautiful Fleur-de lis and the sacred monogram alternately carved upon them.

"Come and see the living beauties," exclaimed Archie, and he took his cousin into the stables, and then to see the lovely exotics in the hot houses and ferneries, for aunt Rhoda dearly loved flowers, and her brother was equally devoted to early fruits, in fact, there was not a single day the whole year round, in which grapes were missed from his table.

"We must look in at the old barn, as we pass it" said Archie, "the roof is said to be something wonderful, built by S. Bertram I believe, or some such saint, date unknown, at least by me."

"Not much likelihood of S. Bertram ever having wandered so far west as this," answered Lilia; "but I wish there was someone who could tell us all about it, is there any record of it to be found about the house?"

"I am sure I don't know, but here comes Lord Borthwick, we'll ask him."

Lord Borthwick shrugged his shoulders and raised his eyebrows at the question, and then said with a smile at Lilia, "I so largely prefer *modern* beauties to ancient ones, and young ladies to old nuns, that

I really am much better able to give an opinion on the merits of the one than the other, that is to say, never having been able to discover any *merits* in the old nuns, I have never troubled myself to make any enquiries respecting them. I believe most nunneries had a monastery near, so no doubt had I lived in those days I should have been a monk, and *then* I should have been able to tell you something about the fair occupants of this soil; as it is, I really know nothing that is pleasant, I believe the old barn must have been the chapel, because I have heard that the cattle in the yard had refused to drink out of their stone troughs because they thought them to be the coffins of the nuns." And Lord Borthwick laughed a light musical laugh, but Lilia shuddered.

When they re-entered the house, aunt Rhoda came up to Lilia and said "Your aunt has ordered the carriage at four o'clock, and I have been thinking whether you would like to walk across the park with me and meet it at the end of the village. I could shew you some lovely views, and also a bit of old ruin which I think you would admire."

Lilia thanked the old lady heartily, and at the time appointed was ready to start with her.

"Come, that's capital," exclaimed she on entering the room and finding Lilia fully equipped for the walk. "It is quite a treat to find people who are punctual, It is not the fashion with young folk now-a-days. We shall be able to stroll along and see everything, for I am going to take you what I call *my* walk, which takes us into the village in about a quarter of the time that it will take the carriage to come round to the same spot. I am so glad you admire the old house, sorrow and joy have endeared it to me. And if we had time, I should so like to take you into the church and shew you my darling sister's monument, not that it is the style I admire, but my brother said it was the right kind to put up; her grave is just

under the south window of the chancel, and I am hoping some day to make that window into a memorial one to her, but that's just my own idea, so you need not say anything about it. Now, come this way here, down into this ditch. I suppose you can scramble where I can. This is supposed to have been the pond where the nuns kept their stock of fish ready for each fast-day, but there has never been any water in it in my day; they say it was purposely dried up, to prevent the villagers from exercising a right they had to come here for fish once a week; the *law* could not be turned aside, but the *water* could, and might was right in those days whenever it could, and when it could not be, other means could easily be found out and put in requisition."

Thus chatting on, the two passed through a portion of the park, into some woods, where the trees formed a perfect archway over the smooth grasswalks; here and there was an opening, and a lovely view presented itself to Lilia's delighted eyes. Over the woods, which wore every tint of summer green, she looked on to a long slope in the park, which terminated in a hollow that seemed to slumber in a deep blue mist. Beyond was another wood of deepest green, making a dark middle distance to the picture; then came some corn fields, ripening into gold, and a few farmsteads dotted about in their groups of trees, and far, far away rose soft tinted hills melting away into the horizon.

"How beautiful," murmured Lilia, "it only wants water to be perfect."

Aunt Rhoda did not answer, but walked somewhat rapidly on; suddenly stopping, she said "Look there," and Lilia saw through the next opening in the wood that the blue mist line in the former view had now developed itself into a bright shining river.

"Oh! that *is* charming," she exclaimed, "I am quite glad now that I did not see it before."

"Ah," said her companion, if we had everything at once, there would be nothing left to wish for. This world is very beautiful, but there is always a "but" in every turn of life."

Lilia looked at aunt Rhoda in astonishment, she had not expected to hear anything bordering on sentiment proceed from those lips, she was not prepared to find a "flower blossom" coming forth from that "rough soil." It was a very pleasant walk, and often in after years would both parties recall it with feelings of mutual gratitude. The young little knew how much it lies in their power to add to the daily diminishing joys of the old, or surely they would oftener bestow their society upon them. There are fewer more beautiful sights than when age and youth are met with a mutual determination to ignore self, in order more fully to enter into the pursuits of the other. And still more delightful, though less unselfish, is the pleasure when the sympathy is really mutual, and such it was between these two, as they walked and talked together that bright summer day. The ruin was reached, but aunt Rhoda could tell but little of its history, and so grass-grown and weed covered had it become, that it looked as if asking nature to cover it up and hide it altogether from the gaze of human beings who had so long neglected it.

"There are many stories told concerning its original use," said the aunt, "but they are mostly so senseless and improbable that I do not care to repeat them, what seem most likely is that it was the hospital for the sick in connection with the nunnery. The distance from the residence makes that a not unreasonable suggestion, and we know that the nuns of old, like our sisters of charity in the present day, understood the art of leechcraft. But now we must be getting on, for if there is time, I want to call in at that cottage yonder, and see how the poor man has passed the night."

"The one who broke his leg yesterday?" enquired Lilia.

"I hope not *broken*," said aunt Rhoda, "but until the doctor had been, they could not tell the extent of the injuries he had received; it is such dangerous work that sand digging, they undermine and undermine, till down topples a huge mass, too often burying or at least injuring the men below."

Just as the two ladies reached the cottage, the aunt exclaimed, "My dear child, do tell me if that is our clergyman crossing that further field, my eyes are not good enough to see so far."

"It is a clergyman," said Lilia, "but whether yours I can't tell, he has grey hair and stoops rather as he walks."

"Ah, yes then, that is he, I do so want to see him, so will you go in and rest yourself at the cottage, and tell the people I shall be back in a few minutes. I think I shall just catch Mr. Langdon at the stile."

So saying, away trudged aunt Rhoda, leaving Lilia to introduce herself into Wilkin's cottage. Rapping gently at the door, it was speedily opened by a tidy looking middle aged woman, who bid her enter, saying, "I beg pardon ma'am, but I thought you was the doctor, I have been watching for him all day, and poor Jem is in such pain, I don't know what to do; I can't leave him to go for to fetch the doctor, and the big children is all at school, these here little uns are too small to send of errands."

"But has no doctor been to him yet?" asked Lilia.

"Oh yes, and the parson, and our lady at the Hall, were all here yesterday; but lor, them parish doctors don't care to come a second time, unless they're sent for or obliged; I was hoping someone might come along and sit with him a bit whilst I ran down after him."

Lilia immediately explained who she was, and that she would gladly make herself of any use till

aunt Rhoda came for her. Mrs. Wilkins thanked her heartily, and taking her into her husband's room, left her there, whilst she ran off for the doctor. The poor man lay groaning for some time, scarce heeding the tender enquiries Lilia made respecting the pains he was suffering, and the offer she made of altering the position of the cushions which propped up the injured limb, but by degrees the pleasure of having a fresh person to whom to relate how his accident happened, made him for awhile forget his sufferings, until a burst of merriment from the little children in the next room caused the father to raise his hand to his head, with the remark how much every noise jarred him.

‘ I wish I had something for them to play with out of doors,’ said Lilia, ‘ shall I tell them to go out in the garden, and look out for the doctor, perhaps that would keep them quiet a little while, at all events they would be out of your hearing.’

‘ Thank you Miss, I think there be some broken toys on that shelf there yonder, and an old bit of a spade, they might have them and go and dig among the old cabbage stalks, that can’t do never no harm. I should think my missus won’t mind that, but she be precious chary of letting them little uns out ’o doors without she’s by ’

Lilia took down the toys and soon beguiled the children out into the garden, and was returning to the cottage, when one little girl looked up in her face and said beseechingly, ‘ Give me one of your flowers.’ Lilia hesitated, the flowers were of a new kind to her, and she had gathered them from the ruins to preserve them as specimens to take home with her. ‘ Please do,’ continued the little suppliant, ‘ and Bill will dig a hole with the spade, and make it grow.’ Doubtful of the success of the experiment, but hoping the trial of it might keep the children safe and quiet, Lilia yielded up her flowers, and returned to the bedside of

the invalid. She had not been seated there long before a man's step was heard at the cottage door, and a man's hand soon after pushed open that which led to the inner room, the hand was alone to be seen, and a very brown rough looking one it was, but the voice sounded pleasantly as the owner turned back to speak to the children. "Oh, that's the doctor" exclaimed poor Wilkins, trying to raise himself in his bed and pull off the bandages of his leg. Lilia rose to leave the room, just as a tall awkward-looking young man entered it. And more awkward than usual did he then appear, as he became so suddenly and unexpectedly confronted with a young lady.

"Pray don't go," was his first exclamation, "I'll come in again presently."

"Oh, no," said Lilia, "do stop, you can do so much more good than I can to this poor man, and he has been looking for you so anxiously."

"Has he?" enquired the young man.

"*Has* he, indeed," thought Lilia, "these parish doctors certainly must be very heartless creatures, first to speak with such indifference to the poor man's sufferings as coolly to say he would come in again presently, and now to express surprise at his anxiety to see him, when perhaps the loss of his leg may be the consequence. And recollecting Mrs. Wilkins' words that "them parish doctors don't care to come a second time," she *felt* indignant, and could not help shewing the feeling a little as she replied, "Every moment seems an age to a sick person when expecting a *promised* visit."

"I am really very sorry," said the offending party, but I could not come before, and as to making a *promise*, some one must have done that for me."

There was something so gentle and penitent, Lilia thought, in the young doctor's tone, that she felt softened towards him, and said, as she bowed and left the room, "Perhaps there is some mistake, but I

understood you had promised from Miss Rhoda Clark," and Lilia, closing the door, and hurrying away, did not hear the astonished exclamation of "Aunt Rhoda! why Wilkins, who is that."

Lilia met aunt Rhoda near the cottage gate, and telling her the doctor was with Wilkins, the two proceeded along the lane to the appointed spot of rendezvous with the carriage, which soon made its appearance, and Lilia, warmly kissing her acquaintance of a day, sincerely hoped the time was not far distant when they might meet again. There was that in the heart of each which awoke a responsive chord, although their ages were so dissimilar.

When Lord Borthwick settled himself that evening for his after dinner nap, his son slipped out of the room to join his aunt and have a chat with her. The old lady was in a somewhat oblivious state when he entered, made apparent by the sudden start and grasp at her knitting, accompanied by an observation of no very particular sense or meaning. The fact was, poor aunt Rhoda had had a very short night's rest and a tiring day, and she *was* asleep—it's no use denying it, although, of course, she would not have confessed it, for it seems to be generally accepted that falling asleep anywhere but in one's own legitimate bed is a crime never to be acknowledged by the culprit. The probable cause of her fatigue crossed MacDonald's mind, and creeping towards her as gently as he could (he only knocked one chair against another and overturned a footstool), he seated himself by her side, and taking her hand in both of his with the tenderness of a woman, said, "I am sadly afraid you sat up late for me last night, for I find the cart came to meet the midnight train."

"Oh, my dear boy, you know we had a party, so of course we were all so much later than usual."

The sly old woman, she thought she had managed that "suppressio veri" so well.

MacDonald smiled, and stroking down the wrinkles of the old hand clasped in his, said, "Now aunt, tell me how came you to make promises for me, which it was very doubtful if I could fulfil, and also how came you to give Wilkins' children those creepers I brought from Rome on purpose to grow over our old ruin?"

The old lady put on her spectacles (they had fallen off during her short repose), and deliberately did she gaze on her nephew before she found words to express her surprise at the charges brought against her; at last she slowly said, "*I* make promises for you. *I* give, or ever think of touching *those* plants. My *dear* boy, what *do* you mean?"

MacDonald then related his visit to Wilkins, and when he described his interview with Lilia, aunt Rhoda fairly burst out laughing, and exclaimed, "Why, she took you for the doctor, that was a good joke, and *she* was the thief who stole your flowers. I remember she ran round the ruin to look at it whilst I slowly walked on, so I did not notice her gathering them; well, well, it's all your fault, not having come down here yesterday and been, properly introduced, as you ought to have been, for your grandfathers were boys together and friends all their lives, and their children after them; they did say it was to have been a match between your father and one of the girls, and because it did not come off, was the reason always assigned for his remaining single till so late in life. I don't know what the truth of it all was, only I do know I was very much surprised when your dear mother told me she was going to marry "old Borthwick," as people had begun to call him."

A silence of a few minutes followed, and then MacDonald said softly, "I have seen *such* a design for a memorial window, but we must not afford it yet. *She* would not wish it with the work now in hand. I hope young Langdon won't wear himself out; I wish we could put a little of his spirit into his old father, but I suppose that's hopeless."

"Not quite," said the aunt, "I had a talk with him to-day, and that's how I came to miss you, and you had that absurd *tête à tête* with Miss Bertram." And aunt Rhoda laughed again at the remembrance of it, but her nephew looked rather vexed, and said, "What an unkind creature she must have thought me, if you see her again or write to her, will you—but oh, it does not signify, I daresay she has forgotten all about the occurrence by this time, and it is not likely we shall ever meet again, so what matter what she *thinks* of me. I wish I did not care so much what people *thought* of me, I do believe it's my besetting sin, and half my awkwardness proceeds from self-consciousness. As Carlyle says, 'Shyness is but another name for vanity.' *I vain*," and the young man surveyed himself in an opposite mirror, and there was bitterness in his laugh.

CHAPTER VII.

"There be few, O child of sensibility, who deserve to have thy confidence;
Yet weep not, for there are some."—M. F. TUPPER.

"Dear, dear mother, have I done rightly?" And Lilia hid her face in her mother's bosom and wept like a child.

Yes, she had told her mother all. These two had never had any concealments between them before, but when the first words of love were breathed to Lilia by her cousin she could not sit down quietly and transcribe them for her mother's perusal, yet little by little she let her see by her letters that her young heart was opening to the first impressions of love. And then came those little interruptions to its

progress, which might have been but "lovers' quarrels," but for the *principle* which had ever been the cause which provoked them. It was always from some attempt on Archie's part to induce Lilia to be guilty of some act, however trifling, which she had felt to be wrong, and which had led her to refuse in such terms as her cousin termed "lectures," and she, feeling how utterly at variance with her womanly instincts were all such "lectures," had grieved over the painful position in which they placed her. It was the same story over and over again. "Lilia, will you do it?" and Lilia's refusal. Then came importunity, followed by hasty words, as Lilia's reasons and objections were brought forward, and Lilia would weep in silence, and blame herself for having as she feared not worded her reproof with sufficient kindness, and in sorrow would she return to him and ask his forgiveness, and he would then be lavish in expressions of grief for his conduct, promises of improvement, if only *she* would undertake to be patient with him, and teach him; and in the softest and most endearing tones would he renew his protestations of deepest love for her, representing how all his future good for time, for eternity, rested with her. These scenes, as Lilia's visit was prolonged, became of more frequent occurrence, until at last, summoning all her courage, she told her cousin her mind was made up to return home the very next day. Poor Lilia, it had been a hard struggle for her to arrive at this determination, but her high and holy sense of duty had conquered, and the hours of the previous night, spent in close communing with her heart and with her God, had opened her eyes to see what had been hidden from her sight by that bright and dazzling glow of first love, and slowly and sadly had she pulled to pieces leaf by leaf, that flower-bud of hope which the canker-worm of distrust would never have suffered to ripen into the maturity of true love. Blaming her-

self for having allowed matters to have gone so far between them, she tried to spare her cousin, but her sorrow and her tears were more than he could endure to see. Claspng her to his heart and covering her with kisses, he besought her forgiveness for not having at once done as he knew he ought, and have asked the consent of their parents to their engagement.

"But Lilia, dearest, I only waited because we are both so young, and I thought they would refuse, and part us, so dry your tears, and to-morrow I will speak to my father, and write to your mother, and all will be settled."

"No," said Lilia, gently extricating herself from him, and drawing back a step or two, "this is our parting now, do not say one word more, it is useless. I will not conceal from you the pain it is to me, but I feel it has all been wrong. It is not for me to 'lecture' you," and she tried to smile as she uttered the words, and added, "Just fancy what our life would be together, you always naughty and I always scolding." Then changing her tone, she went back to the same strain in which she had commenced, and holding out her hand to him, said, "We part good friends Archie, and when we meet again it shall be as 'good friends' still."

"To-morrow," said Archie, "to-morrow we will settle it all," and he pressed the hand he held passionately to his lips, and for a few moments Lilia did not attempt to withdraw it, then, as a deadly sickness crept over her heart, she tore herself away from him, and rushed into the solitude of her chamber, there to give vent to a passionate outburst of unrestrained grief.

Archie walked away from the spot where she had left him, and smiling complacently to himself thought, "the girl is desperately in love with me, and to-morrow will regret all she has said."

With these feelings did he therefore redouble his

efforts to please her in every way, that last evening they were together, and in rather a triumphant tone he addressed her on the following morning, saying, "You are not going to leave us to-day, are you?"

Lilia shook her head sadly, and said, "Yes, all arrangements have been made, and aunt is kind enough to say she will go herself to the station with me as soon as she has had her breakfast.

Archie placed himself directly in front of her, and slowly and somewhat sternly said, "Lilia, you do not mean what you say, surely, surely, you *cannot* leave me in this way, after all that has passed between us, only consider."

"Archie, I *have* considered," interrupted his cousin, "and I *cannot* say otherwise than I did yesterday, it is best for us both to part now, so please say no more."

There was a tremble in her tone as she uttered the last few words, and her cousin gathered hope from it, and, advancing a step, offered to take her hand, but, drawing back, she said firmly, "No, Archie, all is at an end—and for ever."

Had her cousin, even then, tried once more to win her back with his often-before prevailing gentleness, there is no knowing but that poor Lilia might again have relented; but, happily perhaps for her, his evil genius then rose in the ascendant, and with angry passion he gave vent to his feelings, and spoke such words as he afterwards most bitterly repented of—yes, when *too late*. Alas! alas! and is it not almost always when *too late* that we *do* repent of our angry words and hasty actions.

The carriage rolled away, Archie was not by to bid his cousin farewell, or give the customary civilities at the parting of a guest. And Lilia is at home again, and has told all the joys and sorrows of her late visit to her mother, and has concluded all with that bitter wail, "Mother, dear mother, have I done rightly?"

Oh, the comfort the inestimable comfort of having one whom we can trust, one to whom we can dare to tell all our sorrow, all our sin.

“How sweet in that dark hour, to fall
On bosoms waiting to receive
Our sighs, and gently whisper all;
They love us,—will not God forgive?”

Yes, sorrow and sin, there is no parting those two, they are inseparable, and will continue so till time shall be swallowed up in eternity, and “sorrow and sighing be no more.”

With confession, followed peace. And in peace we will now leave mother and daughter awhile, and see how our other characters, by pursuing a different line of conduct, arrived at a different end.

Mrs. Watson is seated at work by a little table near the window in her drawing room. Presently she takes off her thimble and spectacles, and placing them on the table, folds her hands together on her lap, and gives vent to the then usual observation of “Dear me, the days *do* draw in now,” and looking at her watch, proclaimed the hour, thereby rousing Mr. Watson from a species of dose into which he had fallen on finding the light become too dim for him to continue his occupation.

“Where’s Adelaide?” was his response to his wife’s remark.

“I fancy I have just heard her come in,” and Mrs. Watson put her head on one side and listened.

“I don’t like her being out so late,” said her father.

This was the thought that was passing through the mother’s mind at the time, but her reply was not quite in accordance with her feelings.

“Oh, it is not late, only it gets dark so soon now.”

Adelaide entered, and to her father’s mild reproof, lightly answered, “It’s a lovely evening, and there’s nothing to do indoors, so I like strolling about.”

“But *I* don’t like your doing it,” said her father, “keep about the grounds if you like, but I do not

think it the right thing for you to do, to be wandering about so late by yourself, and I have told you so several times."

Mr. Watson spoke more sternly than was his wont, and his daughter sat herself down at the further corner of the room, planning in her own mind how best to evade her father's knowledge of her absence from the garden for the future. "It is most provoking" thought she, "that Archie can only come so late now, and I am sure I am not going to give up meeting him, just for my father's old-fashioned scruples; it is not as if he were an improper person to meet. My mother is always asking him to come here when he likes. My father too; why, they often have business to do together, and why I can't just run out and have a chat those days he does not come here I can't see; and I don't care what they say, I *will* go out, whether they like it or no."

Consequently, the next evening, when Adelaide returned home from her stolen interview, she slipped in at the back door, stole quietly upstairs to her own room, and after remaining there a few moments to cool herself after her hurried walk, she came downstairs, and opening the drawing room door, exclaimed, with well feigned astonishment, "What! no candles yet? Why, I have been sitting in my bedroom, doing nothing, and thought it quite time to come down and see what you were about."

"Well, I will tell you what we were about," said her father, smiling, "we were planning a little trip to the sea! Won't that be pleasant?" Adelaide's countenance fell, it was lucky for her there were no candles.

Her mother then chimed in, saying, "I have not been feeling well lately, and your father thinks the change will do me good, and you are so often complaining of being dull, that we thought, as your cousins are gone to the sea, that we would join them, it will

be a pleasure for you, and I hope a benefit to me."

No answer.

"Are you not pleased to go my dear?" asked her mother.

"Oh, if it will do you good, of course I am, but—" Adelaide hesitated, she wanted to find a reason for not wishing to go, but did not know where to discover a false one, and dared not tell the true. Her mother had once remarked on the frequency of Mr. Morecombe's visits, and made a sort of joke of it, but never encouraged her daughter to express in the smallest degree what were her feelings towards the young man, although for many weeks past *he* had been saying and doing all in his power to engage the young girl's affections, and, although the evening meetings were unknown to the parents, still the frequent morning calls were sanctioned, if not encouraged by them. On the father's part, very possibly, only in the light of a pleasant companion, coming in to idle away an hour when he had nothing else to do; or, as was sometimes the case, to bring a message concerning Sir Peter's accounts, to whom Mr. Watson had now become almost in the position of Secretary. His clear head and kind heart had felt how unfit both father and son were to transact money matters, and his boyish love for the one had grown with his growth, and he felt glad to be able so to manage as to keep his friend's affairs in good order, without appearing to interfere too much in them, and Sir Peter was really grateful to him for saving him the trouble. As he grew older his indolence increased upon him, and he found it much easier to say "Go and ask Watson" than to bestir himself to answer a business letter or examine his own accounts. It was about this time that his son, wearying of the monotony of a country life, which had only just then the variety of a daily flirtation with a pretty girl, began to sigh for a change, and hearing from a late college friend of the charms

of a military life into which he had just plunged, Archie bethought him it would not be an unpleasant way for *him* also to pass a few years, and broached the subject to his parents.

"My dear boy," exclaimed his mother in alarm, "oh, pray do not think of anything so horrible, what, go away to be shot, or die in some dreadful climate?"

"My dear mother, the Guards don't run much risk of being shot, or dying in bad climates, and really I am so tired of living here with nothing to do."

"But," said his father, "there is the shooting just begun, and hunting to follow, so that really now, you are more in the way of having something to do than of late."

All arguments were of no avail, *even* his parents' very sensible and reasonable ones! No, a soldier Archie meant to be, at least for a time, he was in truth wanting to get away from his home and, it must be confessed, from Addy Watson, who now looked upon herself as properly engaged to him, although no mention of such a thing had ever been named to anyone, and there was nothing that Archie Morecombe had ever actually said which could be quite interpreted into an absolute engagement; he had in fact treated her as formerly he had his cousin, drawn her into an acknowledgment of reciprocal affection, and there let it rest. He would meet Adelaide day after day, and when alone, would not hesitate to express the warmest love for her, but in the presence of others his manner was but the courtesy of a gentleman or the kindness of a friend.

Having at last obtained the concluding remark of his father, "Ask Watson," he had repaired to that gentleman's house and laid before him the desirableness of his joining the army.

Mr. Watson thought for a few moments, and then, brushing back the hair from his forehead, remarked, "I really think it not at all a bad idea of yours, I

have been for some time past feeling that it was a pity you should just fritter away your existence here, in fact, I did, not long ago, suggest to your father the advisability of your doing something, and suggested the bar, as I knew your mother disliked the notion of the army, and I thought as you had been to college, that you might easily manage the bar, but neither Sir Peter nor your mother seemed to wish it, but hoped you would find some occupation and amusement at home, though I told them you did not **take** to farming or accounts. But I will see to this new idea of yours, and get the money lodged ready for purchase at once."

Archie thanked him and left the room, and entered the one in which he knew Addy was watching and waiting for him. Closing the door gently after him, and placing his back against it, he held out his arms, into which Addy rushed with all the blushing confidence of a betrothed.

"Darling," whispered he, bending down and kissing her, "I can't stop but a moment this morning, but you'll be at the Three Elms this evening, won't you?"

Adelaide hesitated, and then said, "I don't know what to do, my father has made such a fuss lately about my going out so late, and just as if to prevent me, he has arranged for me to take a message to Long Acre Farm this afternoon, so that I may be back early,—so tiresome."

Archie thought for a moment, and then said, "But could you not be *detained* there till late?"

Addy lifted up her eyes to his, and smiling, said, "Oh, how naughty of you, no, I don't think I could say that."

"Why not?" asked the tempter "it is just as likely as not that they might all be out, and you have to wait till they came home for the answer, and they would not be in before tea-time, so that you *could* get your answer till then. Yes, that will just do,

you come across the common then, and I will meet you and take care of you home; now, don't look doubtful, you will do that, won't you? Promise me."

Addy still hesitated.

"Come, come," said he, "I won't have those pretty lips pouting to spoil them," and his own met them as he spoke, and then holding her at arms length, he said, "Addy, do you love me? If you do, you will do what I ask, and besides, our meetings may not be very many more just now."

"Yes," said Addy sorrowfully, "I suppose I must go to that horrid sea, I hate it, and can't think what can be the good of going poking down there into a stupid lodging, just when the country is looking so beautiful."

Archie smiled at this sudden outburst of admiration of the *country* and put it down in the tablets of his memory as an erratum—for "country" read "Archie," and he was satisfied accordingly. The next thing was to break to her the notion of *his* leaving, and at first she could not understand the possibility of *such* a parting; it had seemed bad enough for *her* to leave to go away only for a short time, but for *him* to leave, and that for some indefinite period, was too much for her to believe a possibility. Tears stood in her eyes, and were with difficulty kept from falling, but the assurance that it was only a far distant idea, and one perhaps that after all might never come to anything, comforted her, and when a vague sort of promise of, after all, only a short parting, to be followed by a meeting, to part no more, then her spirits rose, and she bid good-bye that morning to her lover, with a firm resolve that, come what might, she would meet him again that evening, at the hour and place appointed.

"Oh, what a tangled web we weave,
When first we practice to deceive."

"Prevarication," follows after "Evasion," positive
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falsehood after the indirect one, and what must be in the end thereof?

Bitter were the tears which Adelaide Watson shed on her pillow that night. She knew she had been untrue in her answers to her father, that she had *deceived* him. And she *knew*, that, though that earthly father still believed her pure and guileless, there was a Heavenly Father grieving over the sin of His child, an elder Brother waiting to intercede for her, a Guardian Angel folding its wings over eyes that wept for her, and a voice that said, "Repent, and be forgiven," for "There is joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth."

CHAPTER VIII.

"Selfishness is generally at the root of the injustice of men; ignorance and impulsive feeling of that of women. Thus, the former are mostly unjust in action, the latter, in judgment; they are not trained to reason on what touches their feelings."—SHIEROFF on "*Intellectual Education*."

In our copy-books we were taught to write "Money is the root of all evil." Now I should very much like to dive into the minds of all infant scrawlers of that adage, and discover what (if any) idea was thereby conveyed to them. Most probably none at all, but should some one, more precocious than the rest, really give a thought to the words he wrote, surely he would be sorely puzzled to discover what wonderful great harm there was in the current coinage of the realm. Possibly he might know his father worked very hard to obtain it, and his mother to retain it, and they were both good honest people, not given to love evil things. Moreover, he might remember sundry gifts of this same "evil" thing, by which they had encouraged him even to value it.

And though in the days of earliest infancy, a piece of bright tin or tinsel ornament, a medal struck in honour of some public event, was every wit as precious in our eyes as the pernicious "money," yet ere long we were taught to know the difference, and to call the one "good" money in contradistinction to the other. And all this with our copy book sentence staring us in the face! So true it is, that what is called "Education" in the schoolroom, is totally at variance with the "Education" in the world, which is taught us when children of a larger growth. Then why not let the first education be a *true* one, why fix on "money" as the *root* of all evil, when after all it is but one of its branches? True, we are told that it will be *hard* for the rich man to enter the kingdom of God, but so we are told of many another. There was no "money" in the garden of Eden, yet surely, if anywhere, the *root* of all evil was *there*! Now, do let us call things by their right names, and let us teach children to know that their first natural instinct, which leads them to desire to appropriate to their own individual wants and wishes all that comes within their reach, is wrong, and *is* the root of all evil. Yes, Selfishness *is* the root, and all other sins are but as extending branches far and wide, or deadly blossoms, poisonous fruits, tendrils, binding us the closer to destruction; seed, to be dropped around to propagate endless misery to future generations! That "Phronema Sarkos" of selfishness born in us remains too often unchecked in us, grows with our growth, and re-appears in our children, and renews the 'Round of Life' again. And why? Is it not because (as Ruskin says) people will think "Education means teaching Latin or Algebra, music or drawing, instead of developing or drawing out the human soul."* If poor Adelaide Watson and Archibald Morecombe

* Modern Painters, Vol. 5, Page 334.

had had but half the care bestowed upon the training of their souls, as had been devoted to their minds, they would not have been thus easily led into sin, through selfishness. It was but for a small gratification of "self" that the one persuaded the other to meet him at forbidden hours; and that other too readily ignored the wishes of her parents to indulge her own selfish gratifications, and though she wept at the remembered sin, she had not learnt that "confession" was the only true fruit of "repentance," therefore it naturally followed that concealment of the first sin led to the commission of the second, until at last, the cheek that had blushed with shame, became bold in the denial of its guilt; and deceit, often practised, lost the horror of its name. Had Mrs. Watson known all, she would at this time have thanked the Hand of Mercy which smote her with that illness her kind husband had proposed trying the remedy of sea air to cure. At length the day for departure arrived, and Adelaide could scarce restrain her tears as Morecombe Park faded from her sight. The bustle at the railway station, the noise and hurry of the train, the meeting with her cousins, and the final settling at the lodgings provided for them, all, for a time, diverted her mind; but as the days wore on, and she had only the memories of the past silently to dwell upon, she became ill and dispirited, declared the sea-air disagreed with her, and also allowed it to be supposed that her mother's health rendered her unhappy. Once, she had secretly written and posted a letter to Archibald, but getting no reply, she had not ventured on a second attempt at correspondence with him. She had often been present when he had discussed business matters with her father, and she now tried to discover if there were any chance of their having to write to each other on such subjects, but could elicit no satisfactory information—all life seemed but a dull blank. Her cousins, good sensible

girls, saw there was something amiss, and tried by all kind and gentle ways to soothe and comfort her, but to no purpose, when an event occurred which for a time changed the current of all thoughts into one channel.

It was a fine bright autumnal morning, and Mrs. Watson was feeling so much better that an excursion was proposed into the country, and a carriage was hired to convey the party; the aunt and two cousins were to accompany them, and as Mr. Watson was putting them into the vehicle, he laughingly observed, "So you did not mean *me* to come with you, I see there is not a seat left."

"Oh, do come," exclaimed the niece seated on the box, "and let me give you this place."

"No, certainly not, my dear," replied Mr. Watson, "but I'll tell you what I will do. I'll just walk round to the livery stables and see if they have a quiet horse, and then I'll ride after you, I shall soon catch you up."

"Oh, pray don't," exclaimed his wife, "don't mount a strange horse that you know nothing about."

"My dear creature," said her husband somewhat contemptuously, "you don't suppose I can't manage a hack."

Whereupon the driver looked round, and touching his hat said, "Beg pardon sir, but there's a very quiet one in our stables, if not hired since I came out."

"Then I'll go and get it, and soon be after you," so waving his hand, he turned back into the house for his hat and gloves, and then proceeded in search of the stables.

The carriage party drove on at the usual slow pace that such equipages proceed when hired by the hour, and of course, in consideration of having an invalid to convey, and likewise the expectation of being speedily overtaken by the horseman who was to follow, but on they jogged, mile after mile, and no Mr.

Watson appeared. Again and again did his wife repeat her enquiries to those on the seat opposite to her, if they saw him coming, but always the same reply. Poor Mrs. Watson, the pleasure of her drive was sadly spoilt, for all her thoughts now seemed to run on the cause of her husband's non-appearance. "Perhaps he could not get the horse." "Could he have mistaken the way." "Was he only joking, and after all did not mean to come." But Mr. Watson was not a man given to joking, and his wife knew it, only she was wearying herself to say all the reasons she could think of for not seeing him, reserving to the last the real thought which nervousness from weakness was pressing on her heart; and at last she said timidly, "I hope there is no accident."

The girls tried to laugh her out of such an idea, and her sister spoke of the beauty of the view just opening to them, and told the driver to stop on the highest ground, so that they might be able to command the prospect and see any approaching horseman, but each road was narrowly scanned and no one was in sight; after some time they turned homewards, saying that no doubt the horse was engaged, and they should find Mr. Watson and his newspaper over the fire, for the evenings were beginning to feel chilly. Leaving their relations at their own door, the mother and daughter returned home. Mrs. Watson's first enquiry to the servant, "Was her husband in?" met with the reply "Not as I knows of, ma'am, he went out soon after you."

"Just run upstairs and see if your father is there," said Mrs. Watson to her daughter, as she tremblingly sank into a chair in the hall.

Adelaide ran up, looked first in the drawing room, then rapped at his dressing room door. No answer. She rapped louder, and then entered, but he was not there. She looked into the bed-room, the best hat was gone out of the box, where her mother always

kept it, to prevent her husband from wearing it on the beach every morning; so then, Addy felt sure her father must have certainly gone out with the intention of following them. Where then was he? A sudden faintness came over her, the room seemed to move round, she caught hold of a chair, and the voice of her mother calling her, made her rouse herself with an effort, and descend the stairs, and in as calm a voice as she could command tell of her unsuccessful search upstairs, and disappearance of the hat.

Her mother thought for a moment, then said, "Is the man gone? look out and see if you can call him back."

"What for, mother, shall I run after him and tell him to find out if Papa went to the stables, and got the horse, and which way he went?"

"No, no, fetch him back, I shall go myself and find out."

"Mother!" exclaimed Addy in surprise, "you are so tired now, you cannot go out again, and the man will soon make the enquiries and let us know."

"My dear child," said her mother decidedly, "don't argue with me; I intend to go. Something has happened, I am convinced of it, and I cannot rest."

"Let me go" said the servant-girl coming up the stairs at the time, "and you stop with your ma."

Throwing her apron over her head, the girl started off down the street, but the cab they had had that afternoon was by that time quite out of sight, so she returned, saying there was a nice looking one on the stand, should she call it? for the girl was catching the infection of the alarm.

Mrs. Watson nodded assent, and Adelaide ran to get more wraps to put over her mother, and also to fetch a glass of wine, which she entreated her to drink. Mechanically Mrs. Watson put it to her lips, but something in her throat seemed to prevent her from swallowing it, and giving it back to her daughter,

she said, "You drink it dear, you look quite tired and cold; suppose you remain at home, and I will get the girl to go with me."

Adelaide's only reply was a reproachful exclamation of "Mamma!" and her mother feeling in spite of her last remark that it would be too much to expect her daughter would remain behind, both got into the cab, which then came to the door, and drove off to the stables. There they found their late driver discussing the subject of their thoughts with another man in the yard, from whom they learnt that Mr. Watson had been there, asked for the horse that had been especially recommended to his notice, but finding that was gone out, he had hesitated a few moments, and then, not liking to be balked of his ride, said he would mount whatever other animal they had at home.

"And" said the man, "the gentleman didn't say as how he was a bad rider, so I let him have master's last purchase. I told him as how to be careful on her a trotting down hill, and he say "All right," and she went out of the yard quiet as a lamb, and—there ma'am, I don't know a nothing more."

"Are there more ways than the one we went this afternoon?" asked Mrs. Watson in an unnaturally calm voice."

"Your's be the regular 'un, t'other has a nasty bit. The gentleman may have gone the old road, but"—A noise in the street attracted the man's attention, and he broke off his sentence suddenly and listened. It came nearer, a sound of hoofs trotting rapidly down the street, boys' voices shouting "Stop her." One moment, and the identical mare in question, her bridle rein broken and flying loose, her sides begrimed with mud, rushed into the yard.

The men uttered exclamations of astonishment as they ran forwards to catch her.

Mrs. Watson gave one piercing shriek and fell back fainting in the carriage. The crowd gathered round

her. Presently an energetic looking young man pushed his way through it, and addressing himself to Adelaide, said in a short decided way, "Tell me, what can I do for you?"

The tone, the manner, were exactly those suited to the occasion, for Adelaide had thrown herself on her mother's neck, and lay there weeping helplessly. The stranger's voice aroused her, and she looked up and tried to speak; a few words were enough, for the scene spoke for itself.

Turning to the driver, the new comer said, "Take these ladies at once back to the house you brought them from. Leave this card at No. 5, Marine Parade, as you pass the door,—there, take care, don't rub out what I have written on it."

Then, addressing himself to Adelaide, he said, "Have you any friends here?" Being answered in the affirmative, he continued "Send then for your aunt directly you get back. Put your mother to bed, keep her quiet, think of her, and not of yourself; if she revives tell her I have taken a doctor with me and am gone in search of your father, as no doubt but that there is some accident; but let us hope not a serious one. And if a Miss Clarke should call presently, don't refuse to see her, for she will do everything that is kind to help and comfort you. Now don't sit and cry, but just exert yourself for the sake of others."

So saying, the young man hurried away, muttering to himself, "What extraordinary creatures women are, I wonder how long that girl meant to sit there crying over her mother, and a pretty way that mother must have brought her up, to have no more sense or self-control than she had on such an occasion. Well, I have given her *something to do*, and after all, *that* is the great desideratum of our human nature." Thus moralizing, Mr. MacDonald reached the doctor's door, and soon after was seated at his side, driving rapidly through the streets.

"Then you don't know who these people are that you are interesting yourself about?"

"Not a bit," was the reply, "I was just going home to dinner when I heard the noise, and saw the horse rush by. Thinking there was most likely some accident, I turned into the yard to make enquiries, as soon as the crowd would let me, and then learnt the facts of the case, of the wife fainting—daughter crying, so tried what I could do, to, at all events, rouse one of them to some state of consciousness."

"Just like you," said the doctor, "I never knew such a man, why you are a regular "purveyor of cases" to me," added he laughing.

"Not a very profitable one," said the other, smiling, "if you had kept to your determination about that first case I brought to you."

"Ah," said the doctor, "but then I took you to be—"

He hesitated, and MacDonald concluded the sentence for him, saying, "Not a gentleman, come now, that's what you meant to say."

"Oh no, not exactly, only I did not think you looked as if you had any money to spare, and I thought as you had done so much already for that poor fellow, I might as well do a little myself, that was all."

"Your little was a vast deal more than mine; you gave your time and talent, which were everything to you; I only gave my time and money, which were nothing to me, but, on the contrary, they were—but I say, doctor, where are you going?" exclaimed MacDonald, as the driver turned suddenly down a narrow lane; "Did you not tell me they had been the high road, so of course we had better go the lower one; but here comes a cart, and we shall have some trouble to pass if the fellow don't draw up on the bank for us."

Accordingly, as they neared the cart, the doctor

called to the man to do so, whereupon he stopped it, and getting down, came up to the gentlemen, saying, "Please you, get up on the bank, 'cause I got an accident inside."

"An accident?" exclaimed MacDonald, "Who and what is it?"

"A gentleman, sir," replied the man, touching his hat as he spoke, and then continued, "He's hurt all over, got throwed from his horse this arternoon, and crawled along somehow to my house, but there was only the children at home in the yard, 'cause my missis was gone to town, and I was out in the harvest field; but when I come in and see him why I just binds him up, and gives him a drap o' spirits, and was a bringing him home like, so if you'll please to get out of the way a bit I'll move on."

The man had to finish his speech by the side of his cart as he followed the two gentlemen to it, for at the word "accident" both had jumped out of their carriage, and hastened to the relief of the mind and body of Mr. Watson, who, good kind-hearted man as he was, lay there on his bundle of straw, grieving more for the anxiety of his wife than for his own sufferings. He was almost too weak to speak, but on being told all, he faintly murmured "God bless you," and sank back unconscious of anything more till some hours after, when he opened his eyes on the anxious group which surrounded his bed.

"Where am I, and what has happened?" he faintly enquired, as he tried to raise himself up. The doctor gently approached, and laying his hand on him, said in a quiet distinct voice, "You have met with an accident, and your right arm is broken. We hope nothing worse, but keep as quiet as you can, will you?"

"Ah, yes, now I remember," and Mr. Watson sank back on his pillow, and wife and daughter thanked God for the "life" given back to them.

CHAPTER IX.

“Behold, the woodbine, opening infant blossoms,
Perfumes the bank whose herbage hems it round,
From its own birthplace drinking in delight;
Later, its instinct stirs;
Fain would it climb—to climb forbidden, creepeth,
Its lot obeys its yearning to entwine.
Around the oak it weaves a world of flowers;
Or, listless drooping, trails
Dejected tendrils, lost mid weed and brier.”

LOST TALES OF MILETEES.

Week after week passed by ere Mr. Watson could be moved home. At last, one bright December day saw him start for the long wished for journey.

“Now I shall soon get up my strength again,” said he, and in his joy the spirits of wife and daughter revived. It was not the broken arm, though that still hung helpless in its sling, but the fearful sprains and contusions which the struggling to release himself from the fallen horse had caused him, which had kept Mr. Watson so long a prisoner to his bed, unable to bear the pain of being moved home.

Greatly exhausted, he at length arrived there. The full-moon was shining on the windows, making them sparkle as with a smile of welcome. There was something cheerful too in the sound of the wheels of the carriage as they crushed the frozen ground, and bid it soften at its master's approach. The trees had put on a festal garment of white, and stretched out long arms, covered with crystal gems, to greet him.

Arrived in doors, and gently laid on a sofa prepared for his reception in his own little study, the ruddy glow from the fire danced along the walls, and lit up the well-remembered pictures of early youth, glinted on the snow white table cloth, with its bright array of glass and silver, and finally awoke a smile in the

bronzed old countenance of the mahogany bookcase. Mr. Watson was exhausted with the fatigue of the journey, and still very weak from pain and loss of strength, having been obliged to be kept very low from fear of fever. Every one knows the small amount of "comfort" to be had in a sea-side lodging-house, and it was with a feeling of unutterable relief to mind and body that the wearied invalid sank back on soft cushions, and, looking round, felt once more at "Home." Then came vivid recollections of that fearful ride; the rush down the steep hill, the stumble, the fall, the crushing weight of the animal as it rolled upon him, his own violent efforts to rise, the glittering hoofs close to his temple—then darkness, and life for awhile seemed extinct. And now, the contrast, it was too much for the weak man, and raising his eyes to heaven with thankfulness the tears fell on his clasped hands. Mr. Watson wept. His wife laid her hand on his shoulder and pressed her lips on his forehead, and thought "I have never loved him so much before." Adelaide, kneeling by his side, hid her face in his lap, and hated herself as she thought on the past. "No, I will never, never more deceive him," was her mental resolve,—resolve made in her own strength alone, how then would it stand the test of temptation? For some weeks it is true, no trial came in her way, and all went smoothly and happily in her home. She knew Archibald Morecombe had obtained his commission in a cavalry regiment, for her father had arranged the purchase, and she, as his amanuensis, had written several letters on the subject, and therefore, as he was not likely to be at home for some time, Adelaide had found no attractions in the cold frosty days to loiter about in the lanes, or remain out long, but spent most of her time in endeavouring to amuse her father, and make herself useful to him, and had found a pure enjoyment in so doing.

One morning a letter came from Sir Peter, the contents of which seemed greatly to distress Mr. Watson. After perusing it and re-perusing it for some time, he at length said, "Addy dear, would you mind a long walk for me this morning. I want particularly to see the tenant of the Long Farm, if you could go at once and ask him to come to me before post time."

Ten minutes after, Addy was on her way, and sorrowfully did she recall the memory of her last walk there, though, as she passed the spot where she had met her lover, thoughts of his fond words arose in her mind and stifled her regrets. Unconsciously she began to make excuses for her conduct, and the intention of not repeating her fault soon made her feel less uneasy at its remembrance. The tenant was at home, and seizing his hat, at once set off to return with her, as the days were short and Adelaide expressed no fatigue or need of resting; so the two walked briskly across the fields, and ere long Mr. Watson had the comfort of talking over his trouble with a neighbour. As soon as he was gone Mr. Watson sent for his daughter, and asked her at once to write a few lines to Sir Peter, telling him that all arrangements had been made for the purchase of the Long Acre Farm, and that the money should be lodged at his bankers forthwith.

"And now, Addy," said her father, "get out my account book, and let me see how I stand with regard to available money. And then you must sign the cheques for me, for a little while longer I am afraid, until this tiresome member chooses to be of use again," and he looked at his arm and smiled.

Adelaide did all, as her father asked her, wondering in her own mind what it all meant. She was not long left in ignorance, for so soon as her mother had settled herself by the fire that evening and commenced her knitting, Mr. Watson began.

"Its no use trying to make a secret of what must soon be known, though I hope it's not so bad as Sir Peter fears. He is a nervous man, always was from a boy, and no doubt looks on the dark side, but I think I can help him out of it by *at once* buying that farm of him. There were only two reasons against it,—one is settled now that I find Jones had not set his heart upon it. I thought it but fair to tell him first, and hear what he had to say, but as he agrees to remain as *my* tenant in preference to purchasing it, why that's all out of the way, and the next thing is to see how I can manage the purchase at once. I must give as good a price as I can to help my poor friend. He writes "put it in the market," but that would not do, bad time of year for selling, and if once known that Sir Peter were in difficulties, it would go for nothing, besides"—and Mr. Watson hesitated and then said, "I should not like the thing talked about, and if I buy it quietly, and we three keep it to ourselves, why no one need know a word about it, but all the world may still think, if it please, that Long Acre is still Sir Peter's. It can easily be done, Jones always pays the rent to me for Sir Peter, so its just going on the same way. I am so sorry that it won't be Sir Peter's money, it's a sad thing for men in his position to have to come down ; poor fellow, I am sadly afraid it's his son's doing.—Addy, give me those other books in that drawer."

Thankfully did Addy rise and busy herself at the further end of the room, for she feared any remark being made on her start and evident confusion, as her father alluded to Archibald Morecombe. It was not the first time she had heard some slight hints of the extravagance of the young man, but she supposed he had plenty of money, and being an only child of a baronet, and in an expensive regiment, it was to be expected he would spend more money than perhaps his elders thought quite necessary. But Mr. Watson

was in a communicative humour this evening, and went on to tell his wife of many circumstances which had lately come to his knowledge respecting the reckless extravagance of the heir of Morecombe Park.

Mrs. Watson continued her knitting, sometimes making a slight remark, and sometimes counting her stitches, and examining the progress of her counterpane. Since Mr. Watson had been incapacitated from writing he had become more disposed towards talking, and being necessarily compelled to call in the aid of his wife, and more frequently his daughter, in the matter of his accounts and correspondence, they had become gradually aware of all his money transactions, which hitherto, in concert with the generality of the genus homo, termed paterfamilias, he had jealously secreted in his own bosom; but now bills of exchange, scrip, stock, and such like, had become "household words," and Mr. Watson would laugh, and tell his daughter it was a pity she was not a son, as then he could have made a broker of her. This evening he was so full of concern for his old friend's distress, that he made Adelaide at once write for a sale to be made of a large amount of shares in a company, that was at that time in high favour with the public, and paying well; the consequence was that ere long Adelaide was required to sign cheques for her father, and send them to Sir Peter as purchase money for Long Acre Farm.

By return of post came a most grateful letter from the recipient, saying that he could not possibly think of receiving so large a sum for what he knew was not worth it, and begging to be allowed to return one-third, or else he would insist on sending someone to take an inventory of the estate, value, and set a price upon it; but as all this would entail loss of time and expense he asked as a personal favour to be permitted to return one-third of the money sent, which he enclosed with a receipt for the rest of the

sum. And thus ended the private transaction between the two friends, but of which we shall hear anon.

With returning spring came returning strength to Mr. Watson, and when an invitation came for Adelaide to pay a visit to her cousins in London, he smiled and said he thought he could spare his clerk now, and thought she had earned a holiday after so many months work at his ledger. Not for her cousin's sake alone, not for the gay attractions of London "in the season" did Adelaide's heart beat high, as she neared the great metropolis, and knew it contained that being she still loved in spite of months of absence, and silence, and of a neglect which plainly told how little real affection he had felt for her. At times she had said all this to herself—and at times she had even wished they might never meet again, as memory recalled how often their meetings had ended in her being led into a deceit, which she knew to be sin; but now that the chance of seeing him again was put within her reach, she eagerly stretched out her hand to grasp it, and knowing Sir Peter and Lady Morecombe were in their town house, she tried to find some excuse to call on them, in which she was greatly aided by her mother, who endeavoured to persuade her husband it would be the correct thing for their daughter to do. Mr. Watson was of quite a different opinion, so the subject dropped; but on the morning of her departure from home Adelaide renewed it when alone with her mother, and the latter was at last induced to say, "Well, if anything happened to take you into ——— Square, I don't see why you should not just leave a card, and enquire after them."

Adelaide was not long in acting upon this sort of half-permission to call, and soon induced her cousins to take her that way for a walk. The card was taken by the servant and laid on the hall table, and its

existence speedily forgotten by him, for he did not see it again, and why? A clatter of spurs was heard coming down the stairs, Archibald Morecombe espied the card, started as he read the name and address, then pocketed it, and never mentioned his possession of it to his parents for certain reasons best known to himself; nevertheless, a few days afterwards he found his way to —— Square, and was ushered into a pretty little drawing room, where one at least of the party assembled in it, was not a stranger to him. Adelaide's cheek became crimson as she heard his name announced, but his quiet assurance of manner soon communicated the same to her. He gave a gentle *meaning* pressure to her hand, and then addressed himself for some minutes to her cousins, engaging them in the customary talk of Londoners during the month of May. "What did they think of this year's academy?" "Had they heard the new opera?" thus allowing Adelaide time to recover her surprise and pleasure at seeing him. He waited awhile and then asked her after her father and his accident, making her repeat some account of it, and asking her questions, by which she gained courage to talk to him, and lost the nervousness which at first had seized upon her at his entrance. Smiling, he then turned to her cousins, saying, "We are such old friends, you must excuse all our home talk, and we have not met for *such* a time." Then addressing Adelaide, he said, "My mother is such an invalid now, that you must excuse her if she cannot call on you for a day or two; but I hope you won't be running away yet, and *we*, at all events, may meet again."

Then by indirect observations he led the conversation into such directions as enabled him pretty well to discover what were the habits of the family, by which means he rarely failed to meet them in their early morning walks in Rotten Row, or else to find them at home at the hour he called.

A dinner at Richmond was planned, and so well carried out, that Archibald and Addy had full opportunity that day to renew all their old protestations of love, and Addy's uncle and aunt began to think there was more than "old friendship" between them, and to question if they were doing right by allowing the two to be so much together, and whether they ought not to write to Addy's mother on the subject.

CHAPTER X.

———"Je fais tout mon possible a rompre de ce cœur l'attachement terrible, mais mes grandes efforts n'ont rien fait jusqu'ici, et c'est pour mes péchés que je vous aime ainsi."—
MOLIÈRE.

Somewhat in the strain of Molière's words did Adèle at times talk to herself of the passion that day by day wound tighter and tighter round her heart, and of which she had not so much as breathed one word to any of her relations. What then could be the end of this secret love? There had never been any *confidence* between the parents and their only child, and the evil seeds of the education they had given her, now burst into flower, ere long to ripen into fruit to poison their whole life's existence. Alas! fond and foolish men and women, what can *you* expect, who having *souls* to train up to everlasting glory, care only for the perishing body, or at least, a cultured mind. "Verily what a man soweth that shall he reap." Mr. and Mrs. Watson were at their breakfast, and wondering why several days had passed and no news of their daughter's doings, when the letters, which were unusually late that morning, were brought in and given to Mr. Watson. His wife immediately

enquired if there were one from their daughter, but receiving a reply in the negative, she occupied herself with speculations on the possible reasons of that daughter's silence, whilst her husband deliberately opened letter after letter and read their contents. At last turning over the envelope of one, he muttered "Humph! Don't know the handwriting—wonder who it's from." A few moments after and the letter dropped from his hands, and a strange, wild scream broke from his lips. Mrs. Watson rushed to his side and gently lifted up the right arm, fancying some sudden pain in the injured limb, which her husband at once comprehending, exclaimed "No! no! no!" and then burying his face in his hands, exclaimed—"She's gone. She's gone." His wife seized the letter, and trembling so that she could scarcely stand, read the contents, though with difficulty deciphering her own sister's handwriting, so changed was it from sorrow and agitation. A few words told all. Adèle was gone! none knew where, or how; but Mrs. Martin had strong suspicions that young Morecombe was at the bottom of it all, and bitterly now did the good woman bewail her silence respecting the frequent meetings there had been between the two, who had, doubtless, now disappeared together.

Man in grief, woman becomes the comforter, and the weaker vessel bears the pressure of sorrow's weight, better than the more unyielding one; and, best of all, those who can recognise the hand that lays the burden on. But Mr. and Mrs. Watson had yet to learn the full truth of that lesson. They were what the world calls "good people," and so far as all the customary offices of religion are concerned, they really carried them out. They went to church on Sundays, subscribed to several charities, and were kind to their poorer neighbours; and, as we have seen, in the matter of the purchase of Long Acre Farm, Mr.

Watson was ready even to inconvenience himself to

benefit a friend. All this, and much more, may be done by persons who never seriously examine themselves and ask "Am I SEEKING FIRST the kingdom of GOD and His righteousness." Many will say "But I *pray* to God." Yes. You pray to God, but after all that is but a selfish sort of religion. You would not think much of any one's love for you, if he never came near you, but *to beg*! We all too much forget that we were created for the "glory" of God. We are to "worship Him, and give Him thanks, to praise His Holy Name, and tell forth all His works." Oh! there is much to be learnt in the schoolroom here, ere we can be fit to join the Angel's Song hereafter.

Mr. and Mrs. Watson's first great trial had fallen on them, and they could not yet see how they had brought it upon themselves. It was too late now to undo the foolish, worldly education they had given their daughter: and in a worldly point of view they now looked upon the results. After the first burst of grief and disappointment at the disgrace and deceit of their child, they began to console themselves that after all the position of the future Lady Morecombe was not such a bad one, only they would have liked it to have been arrived at by a different way, and Mrs. Watson sighed over the loss of a gay wedding; for she had by this time come to consider it a settled thing that, to avoid any refusal on his parents' part, Archibald had persuaded Adelaide to agree to a "run-a-way match." The day was passed uncomfortably enough by the parents, and it was even with a feeling somewhat akin to pleasure that they read Adelaide Morecombe's penitent letter, which concluded with a message from her husband, to say he was too much overpowered with his conduct to be able to do more than implore their forgiveness; he really could not write it. Mr. Watson could not resist a smile as he read the words; his penetrating clear mind had long since seen through the young

man's character, and he could not join with his wife's sympathy for the supposed penitential feelings. Mr. Watson's chief distress now lay in the fear lest Sir Peter should imagine he had any suspicion of the probability of such an event occurring, and had encouraged it, and he determined at once to go to the Hall and explain matters, so far as he possibly could, in his own present state of ignorance of all detail. Poor Sir Peter's politeness was sorely put to the test by this trial of his long felt friendship for Mr. Watson,—he could not be angry with *him*; but he was mortified most deeply at the match his son had made with the daughter of one he had always respected, but at the same time knew was not placed in the same position in life as himself, and therefore, family pride felt that the connection was a *mésalliance*. But as for her ladyship, her anger knew no bounds, and she vowed all manner of revenge on the foolish young couple. Her intense pride in her only son, and the hope of his making a brilliant career through life, seemed crushed at its very outset; she looked upon his future as without hope, and upon him, as one lost to her for ever. Time passed on, and the Morecombe's wisely kept aloof from the neighbourhood of their parents' domains, and in a small, but fashionable house, in London, managed to pass their time away, without, as yet, much regard to what those parents' feelings were. But the young man's extravagancies soon made him think it desirable to pay them some attention; he knew his own had but partially forgiven him, therefore it would be of no use to apply to them, he therefore suggested to his wife that she should invite her father and mother to come and spend the approaching Christmas with them, which Adèle was only too delighted to do, and thanked her husband for what she fondly supposed to be his kind thought for her pleasure, little dreaming the undercurrent of that husband's thoughts, who

only looked to the civility given to the Watson's, as a means of obtaining pecuniary assistance from them, to supply his own selfish demands. The visit was paid, and Mr. Morecombe took good care to ingratiate himself into the good graces of the Watsons, and at the same time to gently intimate how gladly he would have done more to make their visit agreeable, but that his means were so small as to prevent him, without great imprudence, venturing on the smallest extravagance. To Mr. Watson he talked of money matters, in a way that made him almost begin to think he might have been, at times, somewhat harsh in his judgment of the young man's thoughtlessness. And to Mrs. Watson he would lament over his mother's estrangement from him, in a way that quite overpowered and won a mother's heart. The visit ended happily, by Mr. Watson handing a cheque of considerable amount to Archibald, laughingly saying his daughter could sign it for him, if necessary, as she had done all that business for him so often before. Words which sunk into the young man's heart, and Satan fixed them there, to work him bitter woe in the future.

The possession of this money soon aroused a longing for selfish enjoyment of it, and although his wife gently hinted the prudence of reserving some for coming expenses, still his own wishes soon silenced hers, and he professed that on *her* account he had taken a small hunting-box in the country, as change of air would be so beneficial to her health; and, as yet, they scarce liked to venture into their own country. Archibald was too proud to be the first to propose taking his wife to the Park, and no invitation had come from the Park for them, and of course he would not go to his wife's home, so near to his own, and feel debarred from entrance there. All these reasons speedily convinced the weak and yielding Adèle, and she would try to look pretty and cheerful on her husband's return from

a hunt, though she had been spending a long cheerless day alone, and had found a residence in the country in the winter, and without society, anything but the wonderful renovation to health and spirits which her husband had promised her it would be. One day he came in, in far brighter excitement than was ordinarily caused by the run, and instead of describing the manners of dogs, horses, and fox, began at once exclaiming—"Good news, Addy. I think I have found out a way to induce those obstinate parents of mine to come round, for I chanced to hear the name of MacDonald called out in the field to-day, so looked round to see who answered to it, and found it our worthy relative, Lord Borthwick's son; I had not seen him a long time, but soon brought myself to his remembrance, and as we were, some time waiting for the hounds to find, we had a long chat. He had heard of my marriage, and was grieved to find the separation it had caused in my family, and has proposed coming here to-morrow to talk over a plan for reconciling all parties; and, I fancy, to *see you*, Miss," and Archibald patted his wife's pretty cheek as he said it, and thought "My father's prejudices would soon be overcome did he see again this sweet face."

Next day Adèle, arrayed in her most becoming dress, with the room prettily arranged with bright holly berries and wreaths, and all that could cheat one into the delusion that winter was not so very gloomy a season after all, there and then did Adèle receive the man who was to be the blessing and earthly guardian angel of her existence. As he entered the room a strange awe crept over her, she knew not what it was, and fancied it shyness at the first meeting with any of her husband's kith and kin; but *that* it could not be, for Mr. MacDonald's manner at once made her feel so perfectly "at home," as it is called, with him, that to her own utter astonishment, she soon found she had communicated to him all her most cherished hopes

and longings, and told her own life's tale in so simple a way, that her listener could but wish Sir Peter had been by, and so saved him all his self-imposed task of ingratiating the fair delinquent with the irate parents of her husband. The favourable impression was mutual, for when in the evening Mr. Morecombe alluded with compassion to the lack of personal charms which his cousin possessed, his wife exclaimed with amusing fervour that she did not think him ugly at all, but at times actually good looking, when interested and excited over any topic of conversation in which his feelings were concerned. Archibald smiled, contemplated himself in the glass, and left the room, saying it was a pity Addy had not seen the heir of "Nunshorton" before making her choice in life; which observation caused the young wife to rush after her lord and master, and bestow sundry tokens on him of her preference of her present tyrant to all other created beings.

Poor Addy, those were the sunny moments of her life—there were but too many of the storms and shadows—and she had not been wedded wife many weeks ere she found that implicit obedience to his wayward will, was the only chance of retaining any of his professed love for her, or even of procuring any kind of peace in their dwelling.

The anxiously expected letter at length arrived, and the mediation of his cousin had prevailed, and an invitation was sent for Archibald to bring his wife for a visit, from the Tuesday next to the following Friday. Archibald winced at this limited style of being asked back to that home where he had been the welcomed idol in his former life, and he did not fail to make his wife fully and painfully aware that *she* was the cause of it all, and, therefore, how more than ordinarily grateful she ought to feel for the condescension shewn her by his having married her; and, moreover, he profited by the occasion to tell her she ought to

apply to her own parents for funds to supply her with befitting garments wherewith to be arrayed for the grand event. In vain Adèle protested her wardrobe was in a sufficiently good state, and that, moreover, there was no time, even if she had the money, to procure any additions. Her husband only gave a contemptuous sneer, and muttered that women could always find time when it suited them, but not always the inclination to do as their husbands wished, and he had a great mind to decline going altogether, rather than run the risk of her making a bad impression, at this, their first and most important visit to his parents. Such observations and taunts that she did not care for him, always had the desired effect, and with an aching heart Adèle sat down to beg from her indulgent parents, a further advance on the already anticipated allowance which they most liberally bestowed upon her. This state of things had gone on now so long, that, although charmed at the thought of their daughter at last gaining an entrance to those doors, so long closed against her, still, they accompanied the present donation, with earnest entreaties that she would strive to become more economical, as there must be a limit to such frequent demands on their purse, and they did not feel themselves justified in indulging her in such extravagance, as they felt sure must be going on in her household. The words were kind, but firm, and Adèle knew her father's character too well, not to feel their truth and determination. Had she at once gone to her husband, shewn him the letter, talked the matter over, there would have been, a chance of his retrenching his expensive habits; but there was no *friendship* between these two, and worst of all, no *respect* for each other, so Adèle said nothing of her father's letter, but gave her husband the money, a small part of which was devoted to a few purchases on her account, and of the rest, she heard no more. The visit to the Park, was necessarily a

constrained, uncomfortable one. Sir Peter was truly glad to have his son again with him, and the two spent most of their time together, either riding about over the estate, or lazily chatting and lounging in the so-called "study." Lady Morecombe took her son's wife for a country drive, carefully avoiding any locality where she might be recognised, and then declaring herself much fatigued, advised Adèle to spend the remainder of her time with her own parents, and Adèle, only too thankful to escape, sped across the Park, and was soon in her mother's arms and hanging round her father's neck. All the early associations of childhood around her, she, indeed, felt a "child" once more, and gave herself up to the enjoyment of the present. The striking of the hall clock recalled her to the fact that she was no longer an inmate of that home, and hurriedly seizing her hat she bid her parents adieu, and retraced her steps to that home where she knew she was so unwelcome a guest, and from which she was glad to escape when the few days' visit were expired. The Morecombes soon after returned to their house in town, and with returning Spring came fresh extravagancies and fresh demands on the Watson's purse, met at last by a decided refusal, and a limit put to the annual sum which they promised to send quarterly to their daughter, and which, liberal as it was, scarce sufficed to meet the daily increasing expenditure. Archibald had tried to discover what his father's real means were during their talks together, but like most fathers, Sir Peter was stolidly mute on the subject, and would either turn off the subject altogether, or else complain of the times, the crops, and everybody and everything, but his own indolence, which resisted all Mr. Watson's endeavours to induce him to exert himself and not leave a valuable estate to go to ruin. Archibald next tried to discover from Mr. Watson some insight into his father's affairs; but the underhand way in

which he set to work, soon disgusted that honest-minded man, and he told him plainly, that whatever his own father withheld from his knowledge, it was not his part to reveal, even if he knew; but solely with regard to the transaction of Long Acre Farm, he really was almost as much in ignorance of Sir Peter's affairs as the son himself.

Baffled in all points, and knowing well that the expenses of his regiment more than swallowed up his pay; not choosing to deny himself in any whim or fancy, laying all blame on his wife whenever any vexation occurred; taunting her with want of love for him, because she could no longer prevail on her parents to supply him with means to gratify his selfish desires. In this wretched state what was before him but to fall yet one step lower? Betting and gambling offered their rotten support to hold him up a little longer; but even they soon failed, and as they gave way, he seized, in the madness of despair, on the last horrible resource of a tortured mind, and more than once Adèle had to lead a reeling husband to his bed, shouting—"Money, money; I will have money, by fair means or by foul."

CHAPTER XI.

"So evermore He deems His name
Best honoured, and His way prepared,
When watching by His Altar-flame
He sees His servants duly pair'd.
He loves when age and youth are met,
Fervent old age and youth serene,
Their high and low in concord set,
For sacred song, joy's golden mean."—

SS. SIMON AND JUDE.

It was a sweet little room, that one in which aunt Rhoda spent the greater part of her peaceful life,

and to-day was looking especially lovely, with the roses and jasmines peeping in the window, half twining round the old grey mullions, and half waving to and fro in the light summer breeze, and seeming, in a loving way, to desire to wreath themselves round the youthful head which rested so temptingly near them ; for Lilia Bertram was a visitor to Miss Clark, who had begged her of her mother, whilst the latter was from home and could better spare her than at any other time. Mrs. Bertram had gone to her sister's, and Lilia, for more reasons than one, had felt no wish to visit Morecombe Park ; for, although, her cousin's marriage had caused no special grief to her, still, she could not recall the past without a recurrence of such feelings, as she wisely deemed it best not to run the smallest wish of ever again indulging in. She had felt her first love had been a foolish one, and she had most truly thanked her God, Who had enabled her to overcome the temptation to love one she knew she could never "reverence." And therefore, peaceful and at rest, sat Lilia Bertram that sweet summer day, at the feet of the good aunt Rhoda. Now aunt Rhoda was not an "old maid" after the approved fashion of old maids in story books, and such as we are early taught to consider them ; creatures who, having no aim nor end in existence, generally mar the purpose of their creation. No ! Aunt Rhoda was not such ; had she lived in the days of her brother's ancestors, doubtless, we should then, as now, have found her an inmate of "Nunshorton ;" but times were changed, and with the times, must likewise change, our plans and pursuits in life. What was the best, safest, purest life for women then, and the one in which their concentrated energies found most usefulness, would not work in quite the same way now, though, unquestionably, bodies of men or women working together can effect far more good than the desultory labour of isolated individuals.

The real duty of everyone seems, more immediately, to lie in that work which is placed before them, not the work they go out of the way to find : no, nor the work they each one fancy they would like best. God knows best what we *can* do, and He will put us, each one, into our own part of His vineyard, there to do the work allotted us, which if faithfully performed, we shall receive our penny at the end of the day. Aunt Rhoda did not sit on a high-backed chair, those venerated designs of torture, neither was her room the "very picture of neatness;" but she was actually rather lounging on a small sofa by the window, her feet resting on a large worked footstool, on which Lilia sat, turning over a heap of music scattered on the floor beside her; presently abstracting a canzonet of Mozart's, she held it up, triumphantly exclaiming—"Here aunty dear, is your name on this, so you can't refuse to sing it to me."

The old lady shook her head and smilingly answered, "My singing days are gone by now; I used to try to please Arthur."

"And why not to please me? Now I call that unkind."

Another smile was the only response, which Lilia construing into a relenting one, repeated her request, but only met the partial assent to her wish by the somewhat dubious reply of "Well, perhaps, when Arthur comes," and then added "I really am too tired this morning," and Lilia, seeing that such seemed very probably true, considering how much unusual exertion she had been employing on behalf of her visitor, wisely forbore urging her request, and after a short pause enquired when she expected her nephew's return.

"Any day, any hour," eagerly replied Miss Clark, rousing up to the full extent of her energies at the sound of the loved name, and forgetting all her fatigues, she delightedly dwelt on all the aims and objects of

that dear one's existence. "We are expecting Mr. Langdon's son to come down with him, as Arthur says he has quite over-worked himself in London, and sorely needs rest. Oh! you will like him so much," continued aunt Rhoda, "he is Arthur's best friend, and the good he has done amongst rich and poor is truly marvellous. I do so enjoy a long talk with him, and then (Ah! old lady, now comes out the secret of his charms) he tells me all that Arthur does, which I should never know of or hear *from him*, he is so modest of his own good deeds; and I can tell you numbers of stories, any one of which would make a book I am sure the S.P.C. would be only too glad to publish. Now it was only last week he found a poor old cobbler, in Holborn, sued for rent, his wife lying ill on their only bed, and oh! such distress you can hardly fancy. Mr. Joseph Langdon let me know all about it, for Arthur had hurt his hand and could not write. Ah! by the way, I must tell you how it was he hurt that hand; but I daresay you saw some notice of the affair in the papers, only no names were mentioned; it was such a noble act the way he rescued that boy." And aunt Rhoda would have rambled on in this way all the afternoon had not the sound of an approaching carriage startled her, and rising suddenly she exclaimed—"It's my boy," and rushing out of the room, was caught in the loving embrace of her gaunt nephew; scarcely extricating herself from his arms, she stretched out a hand of welcome to his friend, who was slowly ascending the stairs behind him. Recovering from her first burst of delight, she took the young men into her room and introduced them to her guest. Arthur advanced in a half shy awkward way to shake hands with her, whilst she, remembering their one only previous meeting and mistake, met him with a smile and a blush. Mr. Joseph Langdon only bowed at a respectful distance, and then sank into a chair at the further corner of the

room, and Lilia felt as if some disembodied spirit had entered the apartment, so pure and unearthly did he look. His fair hair was cut remarkably close to his head, and brushed quite away from the marble brow and transparent temple, where the blue veins were but too often seen throbbing with the over-wrought work of heart and brain; the large eyelids drooped over the eyes, and gave a statue-like appearance to the face; but when those eyes *were* unveiled, their depth and intense luminousness seemed to bring to light the very inmost thoughts of the hearts of those on whom their lustre fell, and yet such their sweetness, that those who could bear their searching look, could but feel it was as if some pitying angel came to warn, to soothe, to comfort, and to save. Oh! what a rare and blessed gift is beauty if used aright; but *when* is it used as God's gift—a talent to be accounted for—a light to guide to Heaven? Alas! alas! alas! too often it is but the ignis fatuus that leads to hell. Surely there is just as much folly in ignoring beauty in ourselves and others, as in the over exaggerated estimate put upon it by worldly parents, who view it as a "praiseworthy" possession in their children. After some personal and local talk between aunt and nephew, the former quitted the apartment to see, for about the sixth time that morning, whether the rooms occupied in general by the latter, were in perfect order for his reception. There was a silence of some moments after her departure, which each one of the trio left seemed afraid of breaking. Mr. Langdon was, apparently, absorbed in a pamphlet he had taken off the table, and his friend equally so in looking out of the window; presently Lilia addressed him, but without looking up, in the hope thereby of lessening the shyness, she felt both were suffering from.

"I think I owe you a great many apologies," she began, when he suddenly broke in with

"Oh! no, no, not at all, quite a mistake; but a

very natural one. How is the poor man? Oh! I suppose all right again though by this time; let me see—yes—I believe I have seen him several times since. When did you come here?"

This abrupt change of topic was certainly a relief to Lilia, who told of her journey, and how her visit to his father's had come to pass, and then this led them on to speak of Morecombe Park and its inhabitants, and slightly to touch on the marriage of the son, which heightened the colour on Lilia's cheek, but was unperceived by her companion, who continued his steadfast gaze on the landscape.

"You knew your cousin's wife before they married didn't you."

"Very slightly. I was only once at Morecombe, and she was not much at the house. I never thought then that there was any attachment between them."

"Probably not, at that date. I am afraid she was not one to lead poor Morecombe much on in the right way."

"*Lead*," repeated Lilia in a tone of unfeigned surprise, "I don't think it is for women to *lead*,"

"But they always *do*." And for the first time Arthur MacDonald turned and faced Lilia, who meeting his look with a playful smile, said

"If they do, men should not confess it."

"There I don't agree with you. It is always best to confess the truth, even when an unpleasant one, and one which some people might call us wanting in modesty or self-respect to allow. Now, it must be granted, we all have power, more or less, and we are not lions and tigers, that it doesn't do to let know have power. We know and feel it in our daily intercourse with each other, then having it, why ignore its existence? Surely we are in some way betraying a trust committed to our care." And his voice lowered as he uttered the last few words, and Lilia thought there was much sweetness in its tone.

At this point of the conversation Mr. Langdon let his book slip down into his lap, and as the discussion on "duty" went on, he evidently became interested in it, and at last rising, he left his corner and placed himself in front of the two, who, seated on the sofa, were arguing on the limits to which interference with each others actions was justifiable.

"No Arthur, I think there, you carry *right* to the very verge of *wrong*; at least," he gently said, "our silence may speak more forcibly than our words when prejudices are too strongly rooted to be talked away. There are many occasions when our actions, and the general tenor of our lives, form the only answer likely to be of any avail. Aye, and too often," he continued in a sadder tone, "too often there is nothing left us but our prayers."

After a moment's pause Lilia said, "You must see far more sin and sorrow in your town life than we do in the country."

"Yes, perhaps so, just where we work, but I rather question if it be so as a rule," replied Mr. Langdon; "but on that point I am rather more guided by my father's knowledge than by my own personal experience in the matter, as I have known so little of country life."

"I don't think your father a competent judge," interrupted Mr. MacDonald; he has spent all his life amongst such an unsophisticated set, that he can scarcely realise the amount of sin there is in the world. It is wonderful, certainly, how clever town people are in *inventing* wickedness, but I question whether the country ones are not quite as ready to follow it when put before them, as the sharper ones are to lead them into it."

"Yes, said Mr. Langdon, "I believe human nature much the same in every place, and no one can say, till he has tried, what he himself would do and what

resist. Our very sins, are by God's mercy turned into blessings, by teaching us to be lenient toward others."

As he spoke these words aunt Rhoda re-entered the room and diverted the conversation into other channels; but Lilia sat awhile silent, wondering how such an one as Mr. Langdon could have sins, he seemed so pure and holy, and she had only heard of him from aunt Rhoda, as a very model of every Christian virtue, —it could be but humility on his part; and, as thus she thought, she felt her veneration for him become deeper, and when again he spoke, the tone, the words, thrilled her with a feeling unknown before, and which almost amounted to pain, so that she was reluctantly obliged to confess to herself, it was a positive relief when he left the room to spend the rest of the day at his father's, and she returned to common life again, and the more ordinary chat which the aunt and nephew soon began to indulge in, and which increased in its wordly elements when Lord Borthwick joined the trio at dinner, and found its climax over a game of whist in the evening. Lilia was so glad she knew a little of the game, as it was a favourite one of the old gentleman's, and amused him and "saved his eyes" he said, whilst it left his intellects bright, and aunt Rhoda echoed some of the speech, but rather awoke a doubt in the minds of the younger players as to the intellectual benefit she derived; trumping at the wrong time and an occasional revoke, tried the temper and gentlemanly feelings of her brother to the utmost, but her penitence for her faults, and good humour at the reproof of them, made it impossible for anyone ever to be very angry with her. The next morning Arthur MacDonald went off to the rectory, not able to remain long apart from his friend, who returned with him, promising to remain the night, and Lilia began to wonder if he would be vexed at their card playing in the evening, but she was spared all anxiety on that score, for Lord Borthwick had a

touch of the gout, and did not make his appearance, and the evening was spent in talk and music; and, although with evident reluctance Mr. Langdon was prevailed on by his friends to indulge them with some compositions of his own, yet when seated at the piano, all thought but of the delight of the art itself seemed gone, and his fingers rambled over the keys as if finding vent for a heart's deepest feelings, which words could but faintly reveal. No one said "thank you" when he stopped—the perfect silence had told the sympathy of the listeners far better than that formal phrase could have done. The next morning the party found themselves at the Ruins, a very favourite spot of aunt Rhoda's, and perhaps, no less so of her nephew's. He had dreamed away many a boyhood's hour there, and now in his manhood was longing to realise some of those dreams, and no abler coadjutor could he possibly have found than the friend who now stood beside him.

"Oh! Arthur," exclaimed he, "if we could but restore the walls, perhaps some of the old feeling might be restored with them. It would, indeed, be a glorious work to bring back here again the sound of prayer and praise."

"I am afraid you are too enthusiastic my dear Langdon, but I have hopes of making the place of *use* again."

"Use!" and Mr. Langdon's eyes were involuntarily turned upwards. "What *use* could be equal to that of training souls for Heaven."

"None, assuredly, was the reply, "we only differ as to the means by which to attain the same end, and I hesitate chiefly from fear lest my own wishes should bias me in a wrong direction. I give up to you my first point and think you are right. Aunt Rhoda was always on your side, and now that we have the chance, let us have a second woman's opinion," and he turned towards Lilia and explained to her how his

first wish had been to make the old building habitable for *men*, but that his aunt had said it had been built and endowed for *women*, and she thought the original intention of the founder ought to be carried out. They had had many discussions on the matter, and when the full weight of Mr. Langdon's arguments came to bear upon the question, Arthur MacDonald saw (as is generally found to be case) that what had been advocated by women's feelings was equally true when advocated by man's sense.

"Women," said Mr. Langdon, "have not the same power of deducing inferences as is allotted to man; but oh! it is by far more than made up to them by that sort of instinctive perception of what is right. They are by nature purer, and more intoned towards Heaven, and I can conceive of no better *use* to put this old building to, than to make it a shelter for the innocent or a refuge for the fallen."

After a few minutes silence Lilia timidly observed, "But you must find us work to do, or I fear, even in this sweet spot, idleness would soon become a sin."

"Most assuredly so," replied Mr. Langdon, "I never thought otherwise, and, if you like, I will shew you when we go in, the little sketch of the life I would propose should be led by all within these walls. In the mean time let me just observe that 'to work' was the first commandment given by the Creator to man; the *pain* of work was the curse, not *work* itself. Adam was put into the garden of Eden 'to dress it and to keep it' before the 'thorns and thistles were caused to bud,' as is in the marginal reading. No. There is no sorrow in work. God made not sorrow, but man pulled it to himself; but God made work, and we are called 'fellow workers with God,' and our Saviour says 'My Father worketh hitherto and I work.' And oh! what work there is to do! Truly the fields are white, the harvest is plenteous, but where are the labourers? When will people rouse

from their lethargy and learn that such lethargy is positive sin? Too many think because they do not open grievous wrong, that they, by the reverse, are consequently good. Do such people never read their Bibles, never think, never pray that their eyes may be enlightened. Who were the people condemned to eternal banishment from the throne of God? Who, but those who *did no good*? It is not said 'You did this sin, you did that sin;' no, but *is* said in allusion to good deeds 'inasmuch as ye did it not.' Here lies the test, the only test of true love to God. 'Ye did it not.' Had you loved, you *must* have done it. It is an utter impossibility to love and not feel our every thought and action, guided, dictated by that love. Is it not so in the lower love of earth? No sooner does an affection for another human being become strong within us, but we find ourselves ever referring to that one in every action of our lives. What will *he* think? What will *he* wish? How would *he* have me act in this or that matter? Turn this matter heavenward, and then—the blessedness of existence; always to dwell on the thought of what our loving Saviour would have us do. To have no thought, no desire, but in accordance with His will; to be, indeed, one with Him and He with us. Would that we could so realise our first Communion, that nought could sever us from that blessed, mysterious union." Tears of deepest feeling fell on the thin clasped hands of the speaker as he uttered the last words, and a bright ray of light from the setting sun shot through the western arch and shed a glory round him.

Lilia felt as if an angel had come down to consecrate the spot, and to speak such words to her as she would have to give an account for at the day of judgment, and her last prayer that night was for work to do for God, and grace to do it well. An angel *was* by her then, who heard the prayer, and laid it at the foot of the Throne.

CHAPTER XII.

"Since we deserved the name of friends,
And thine effect so lives in me,
A part of mine may live in thee,
And move thee on to noble ends."—

"IN MEMORIAM," L. x., 3.

When Arthur MacDonald came into his aunt's room, he was somewhat surprised to see his friend quietly seated at the window, by Lilia's side, reading parts of his own little pamphlet on "Work" to her, and discussing passages in it. "Don't let me disturb you," said he, advancing towards them, and only kicking over his aunt's work basket as he did so; and really it was not so much his fault as her's for having left it on the floor; so picking it up, he seated himself and began to "tidy" it before the owner's return should discover any disarrangement of its contents. He remained a few moments silent, and then said "I don't think it fair on a beginner to shew that book of your's, it has so much in it, it is enough to frighten anyone into hopelessness of ever doing anything."

"I should, indeed, be deeply grieved were such to be the effect of its perusal, but something of a like idea was mine also, and that is why I have been reading passages of it to Miss Bertram, instead of lending her the book, as I thoughtlessly promised last night, and she has been kindly telling me what her home life is, so that has been a great help to me in selections. It is impossible to lay down one rule for everybody, and it is far better to take just the thing that our 'hand findeth to do,' than to go out of the way to 'seek great things' unto ourselves. We have but to look prayerfully for our work, and grace to perform it rightly, when found."

Lilia half started at these words, so exactly what her own had been, and she fancied his spirit must have communed with hers and suggested them, and she thought he might have said of the "effect" of his words—"A part of mine may live in thee." She had found herself dwelling on them, referring to them, constantly since the hour they had been spoken. The very tones of his voice seemed ever ringing in her ears, and she felt anxious and excited till his presence had soothed, and his conversation calmed her into peaceful listening and learning.

Arthur MacDonald sat listening to his friend, but his eyes were rivetted on Lilia, as if desirous of knowing what her thoughts on the subject were. At last he started up, saying "I believe Miss Bertram's *duty* just now is to recruit her health and come for a walk, as I don't believe she has been out yet to-day, and we don't deserve fine weather if we don't make use of it."

His aunt coming into the room as he spoke seconded the proposition, and Lilia slowly rising, looked timidly at Mr. Langdon, as if asking whether he were coming too; but he did not raise his eyes from his book, though a slight nervous movement of the mouth shewed he felt the appeal. However, when equipped for the walk she found him, hat in hand, standing by the garden door, through which the party entering the garden passed on to the park and reached the village.

"You must, please, come and see your first village acquaintance," said Arthur to Lilia.

"And tell him you are not a doctor," I suppose, answered Lilia, laughing.

"I am not quite sure he is not one," interposed Mr. Langdon. At which speech the good aunt took up the word and began to tell of some wonderful cures her nephew had wrought—wonderful, at least to her eyes, who thought his every word and work superior to all others; but she was stopped in the

category by Mr. Langdon's changing the subject, for he well knew it could prove but a painful one to the object of such public praise.

Finding the good cottager at his dinner they remained but a few moments, and then proceeded to the "Water Falls," when the young men were interested in tracing the original course which had fed the fish ponds at the nunnery, and been diverted through the selfishness of the unlawful possessor.

"I can't bear to have this place going wrong" exclaimed the heir.

"But you are in a fair way to put it right" replied his friend.

"It's very slow work though. Still what you have accomplished by your last talk to my father is an immense gain. I ought to be jealous of you. I can't get him to see things in the same light as I do, and *you* always can." There was no *look* of jealousy in the eyes that turned on Mr. Langdon, nor in the smile that accompanied the words as they issued from the lips of the speaker. It required another subject before a pang of such feeling could be aroused, and Arthur's mind had once or twice felt a little twinge since the morning when he had entered his aunt's room, and seen two figures so composedly seated side by side; but he had not *said* so yet to himself, and, indeed, scarcely knew it. Lilia Bertram was, in her actual person, almost a stranger to him, but he had heard so much of her from his aunt, who had kept up a constant correspondence with her since their first meeting, that he fancied he had known her a long time. And, in good truth, *letters* do initiate us more than *spoken words* into the real character of most people; so many things are apt to occur to alter or give a wrong impression to what we say. But it is so different with what we write, and therefore Arthur thought he had known Lilia much longer than the time of their actual personal intercourse, and as life

with him had been so much spent amongst men and in his London work, since he left the university, he had had but little intercourse with the gentler sex, and his own idea of woman's worth was what he had from earliest infancy loved in his worthy aunt, so that as *she* knew and loved Lilia, so he felt, that *that* Lilia must be one, if not *the* one, superior to all others; and as he narrowly watched her every movement, and saw how she hung upon Mr. Langdon's words, he felt a strange thrill pass through him, and wondered if it were love.

"Miss Bertram thinks," said he to his aunt, "that it would look so pretty to wind the stream through those meadows, and so back to the old fish ponds again."

"So Mr. Langdon said just now," replied his aunt, "that makes two to one against you, my dear, so I suppose I must come to your aid; but even then we shall only be two to two. Where shall we go to find another to be the casting vote?"

"No need, I think, for that" said Lilia, "Mr. MacDonald will, I am sure, very soon come over to Mr. Langdon's opinion."

"Come over to yours you had better say," replied he rather awkwardly and colouring deeply as he spoke. It was his first attempt at a piece of gallantry, and he regretted it almost as soon as uttered, and thought to himself "What a fool she'll think me!" But she, kindly seeing his confusion, only smiled gently, and said "I really can't take all the 'opinion' to myself, as it was partly suggested by Mr. Langdon as we came first in sight of the stream;" and it was Lilia's turn to blush now, so that it was rather a guilty-looking pair that aunt Rhoda's eyes turned upon just at that minute, and the old lady smiled inwardly and moved away to where Mr. Langdon stood, and found more to say to him than she had ever thought of before. Gentle Mr. Langdon loved the good woman,

and had often sought her advice in such matters as he well knew her better capable of giving than he himself; he had, of course, known her from his birth, and she had been to him, as to her nephew, a mother in all possible ways that came within her reach, and her "twins" as she used to call them, had through her "learnt to love woman." The two stood talking for some time, and Arthur being thus left alone with Lilia, began to think what next to say, and consequently could think of nothing, and began almost to wish his aunt had not left him, as he felt bolder in her presence, and had almost overcome his shyness. At last plunging his stick into a rabbit hole, he said "It's very warm weather now." The fact was an undeniable one, and Lilia, whose eyes were directed towards two figures standing under some trees, answered "Yes, we should find it cooler in the shade." But the hint was not taken by her companion, who continued his first brilliant remark with another, which fortunately enabled Lilia to lead the conversation on to a topic which set him at his ease, and their talk then flowed on more readily.

"It is hotter in London," said he, and I find it such a delicious change to get down here sometimes."

"But you very rarely come, do you?" for I have not met you here before, though I have occasionally been since that first time when we so absurdly met."

Arthur laughed, and said "We certainly were not likely even to meet in London, unless at the Morecombe's. Do you ever visit them?"

Lilia, with some confusion, replied in the negative, and Arthur said, hurriedly, "Oh no, to be sure, it was not likely you'd go there much. Your uncle, I know, disapproved of the match, and thought your cousin had married beneath him."

"Oh! that was not my reason" quickly rejoined Lilia; but I am so seldom in town, and my mother rarely goes into any society but just our own immediate neighbourhood."

"So I should think," abruptly broke in Arthur, "girls get generally spoilt by too much society, as it is called, not that I know much about them; I often wish I had a sister, perhaps then I should not have been the Goth I now am. Ladies are intended to civilise us men, and I don't think it right to shut ourselves so much away from them." Lilia felt inclined to ask "Then why do it; but she hardly knew how to frame the question, so waited till Arthur himself explained it by saying, "You see Langdon has been, as it were, all in all to me, throughout my life, and I never felt a wish from childhood but to be always with him, to do what he wished, and to try and copy him, but that I can't do but at a very great distance, he is so good. Oh you can't tell how good he is; he has given up everything in this world from love of the next. I suppose you know all about him, don't you?"

"No, indeed, I don't," replied Lilia, now thoroughly interested in the conversation, "but I should so much like to know, if you would tell me, something of his life, and how he came to be so wonderfully unlike anyone else. He seems to me like one who never could have thought or done any wrong."

"Now there you are what he would have called 'childish.' Pardon me for saying it; but I have seen him very naughty as a boy, and known his father punish him very severely, for he has naturally a very violent temper; you would not think it to look at him now, and I would not tell it of him, but to show what bad tempers can be done with, for I am sure he has so subdued it that I often could fancy him one who had never fallen from baptismal grace, did I not know to the contrary. Shall we go and sit down on that bank? We shall be out of their hearing, and then I will tell you his story."

Lilia willingly agreed, and Arthur knocked off the heads of a few briars and thistles and smoothed and

prepared a seat for her, and then running off to a short distance, returned with a huge stone, which he placed at her feet for a footstool, having been in the habit of so doing for his aunt, and fancying all ladies, young or old, must be alike. Lilia smiled at the attention, and said she was sorry he should "have had the trouble."

"Trouble!" he exclaimed; "trouble for you; no, I should think not."

He was getting bolder, and did not blush quite so much this time, so rubbed his face, possibly to augment the hue, and then seating himself at a very respectful distance, began his narrative.

"Joseph Langdon was quite a boy when his mother died; in fact, I can hardly remember her, only just as a sort of angelic vision, you can fancy what *his* mother would have been like; he resembles her much more than his father, she had such lovely golden hair, hanging round her like a glory. Have you seen her portrait? No, I suppose not, as it is in old Mr. Langdon's bedroom; but her eyes, they look at you all over the place, and are such a soft, rich brown. Well, Joseph says his first religious impressions were by her dying bed-side, and boy as he was, her last words have never been forgotten by him. I hope I'm not betraying confidences, but I must tell you about him, because I feel it must do every one good to hear of his life, and I could talk to you all day about him; but I must cut my story short, or Aunt will get tired and want to go home. Oh! she's moving now isn't she? oh, no; I see, only just going round the corner; I know there's a pet seat of her's there, so she will rest on it, whilst we do so here, and come to us when ready to return."

He paused a moment, and seemed a little uncomfortable thus left quite alone with Lilia, but was soon at his ease, capitulating the charms of his friend, for whom all feelings of jealousy had at *this* moment

entirely evaporated. He began with a slight sketch of their boyhood together, telling of young Langdon's naturally violent temper, because, he said, it only showed him off to greater advantage afterwards in having so completely subdued it. Then came their Oxford life together, which he passed briefly over, as it was not one so calculated to interest ladies, he thought, though one much to the credit and honour of his hero; *then* came out the first grand bit of his life. He had an uncle, a rich Liverpool merchant, who was anxious to adopt him, having no child of his own, but the condition would be, his entering his office and becoming a merchant.

"Now, Langdon's whole heart," continued Arthur, "was set on the priesthood, and although *every* inducement was held out to him to give it up for worldly wealth, still nothing could change his wish. You must remember that his father is a very poor man. This living here is worth but a trifle, and of course his income dies with him, so that it was a real case of poverty or riches, and he gave up the one for the other; he forsook all for Christ. Yes, truly, I may say so, for just about this time it was." And Arthur lowered his voice, and looked cautiously round before he proceeded.

"Yes; about this time I found out that Joseph had become extremely attached to a very sweet girl, and I believe, had he gone into his uncle's office, he might at once have married her. I never could find out all the rights of the story, it was the only one subject upon which he would not talk, even to me. Perhaps he feared our ideas might have been at variance upon it, and I am sure if the girl had known of his love, and been attached to him, it would have been down right wrong to give her up; don't you think so, Miss Bertram?"

Lilia's look and smile sufficiently assured him that at all events *they* agreed with him, and she thought

how it could be possible for any one not to love such as Joseph Langdon ; but only in a sort of deep reverential way, he seemed above the very idea of earthly love. She felt she only wished to know and love him in his sacred office, and was glad he had resisted the temptation to marry, for such it had been to him.

Arthur continued, "I believe in my own mind that he never once betrayed his love ; I don't know how he managed it, I'm sure, but so it was ; he had firmly made up his mind to live only for higher things, and doubtless, he will be eternally blessed in his choice. I can only admire him at a distance, but then I'm not a priest."

He paused and looked down, and after fidgetting about his stick for a few moments, said very gently, "Do you think I ought or ought not to be?"

The question puzzled Lilia, and she answered hesitatingly, "I can't tell, there are so many things to be considered before taking such a step ; things which can only be known to yourself."

"But what would *your* advice be?" and he looked up at her for moment, and moved a little nearer towards her.

"Will you tell me your own two sides of the question?" said she, somewhat timidly.

"Gladly ; anything in the world that you will only be good enough to ask me ; it would be a real kindness in you, because I feel my own people have their own biases in what they say. There is my father—unquestionably the first person to be considered—he decidedly objects, and says once for all what he wishes, and then never likes the subject broached again. Then my aunt, I believe in her heart, would wish to see me ordained, but she never will speak out her own wishes, she always waits to see what others wish and then says, it just agrees with her own. She is too unselfish in all her advice, always spoilt me from my infancy, and made me selfish."

Arthur sighed, and Lilia smiled, and then she ventured to ask him what his friend said about it, adding "Surely in all points he must be the best adviser in such a matter."

"Yes, no doubt but he is; but, but—" and poor Arthur's shyness returned, and after a violent effort to overcome it, he hid his face in his hands, and fairly succumbed to his painful feelings.

"What a fool she must think me. Oh! I wish I had taken my father's advice and gone more into society; I'm not fit to talk to her. I don't know what to say to ladies; how stupid I am." Such were the poor fellow's feelings, and he almost now regretted that his life had been hitherto spent in assisting his friend in all his labours of love and kindness towards the poor and miserable of his London flock, the only change having been his visits to his old father and aunt at home; so that now, for the first time, being thrown into the society of a sweet young girl, his heart had been instantly touched, and all the refinements of his well-educated mind, combined with the natural one of his birth, rendered him keenly sensible of his own defects and nearly hopeless of any response to his love.

Lilia, with the ready tact of woman, saw his confusion, and though scarcely conscious of the cause, soon found a way out of it for him, and without appearing to notice the sudden cessation of his story, quietly took up the thread of it, and talked until he had sufficiently recovered to continue.

"Mr. Langdon must have so many come to him for advice, he must at times be almost puzzled to know what to say to them all; but I think it is always easier to tell strangers what is best for them, than ones own friends; we can't help being prejudiced one way or other when those we care for are nearly concerned in the decision; that is why it is so much better to go out of our own family to get it,

and that's why you ask me." And Lilia then ventured to look a little at her companion and give him a smile of encouragement to go on with the sketch of his own and Mr. Langdon's life, in which she was becoming much interested.

Continuing in this strain a little longer, he at last ventured to say, "You are partly right and partly wrong; Langdon says, we each have a gift, and are put where we can best exercise it. His post at St. Anne's, in London, was in a peculiar way pointed out to him, as I believe my aunt has told you; and he says mine is here, at *this* St. Anne's. It is rather curious, is it not, that both should be St. Anne's? and he tells me my vocation is to settle down here and put all this place in order, and that I can do it better as the lay owner of the soil, than by entering holy orders; and my own wish is to restore all that once belonged to St. Anne's, and live and work amongst them all my life. Had it been a monastery, my way would have been comparatively easy, but a nunnery alters the case, and it must be as a good to woman that in some way or other I must restore it, and—I feel a woman must help me in it."

He longed to ask, "Will you be that woman?" but his courage failed him, and just then his aunt's voice was heard calling to him and proposing their return to the house.

Lilia rose quickly and joined Miss Clark, and Arthur walked silently by his friend.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Happiness is like a perfume that one cannot shed over another, without a few drops falling on oneself."

Lilia had been reading these words in Southgate's book of "Many Thoughts on Many Things," and could not help thinking how appropriate they were to the state of life at Nunshorton. All but Lord Borthwick himself seemed imbrued with the sentiment, and to seek to carry out its reciprocity of feeling, he poor man was trying, although late in life, to learn it, for the lives of those around had been silently teaching it to him for many years past. Aunt Rhoda's perfect unselfishness had aroused in him thoughts of *why* she should always act in so very different a way to what *he* would do under similar circumstances. At first he had said to himself it was woman's nature to give up to man, and then he would think she did much for her nephew from love to her sister; but by degrees, when he saw the same desire for other's happiness carried out in all her relations, in the house, amongst her friends, in the parish, and then extending to the poor of London, where her nephew and Mr. Joseph Langdon lived, he began to feel that there must be some stronger motive than to make her find her own happiness by shedding it over others. But perhaps none had so brought it before him as the gentle teaching of young Mr. Langdon himself, but *how* he had done it he could never exactly tell. He never remembered his *preaching* to him as he called it, he would have turned away from such; but there was a something in all he said, which had the power of leaving good

impressions on all who heard him, and frequently, when suffering from agonies of gout, he would recall some word of his, and try to bear in patience what in former years would have called forth torrents of invectives against all around him; his child, who had inherited all his mother's tenderness, would at such times rush away terrified, and hiding in some corner of his nurseries, be at last found by his aunt sobbing convulsively. Arthur never wholly forgot or overcame these sights and sounds, although he had passed the earliest years of childhood before his father's return to England, and might by some have been supposed too big thus to act; but perhaps the tender rearing of his aunt at home had rendered him a peculiarly sensitive child, and even manhood had failed to divest him of such feelings.

Von Humbolt says he considers it a sign of poverty of ideas when a man fills his *letters* or *conversation* with narratives of events and circumstances; but he does not go on to say the same concerning a man who fills his *books* in the same way, or what should we poor scribblers do? "Events and circumstances" must be allowed their proper entrance into a book if it pretend to be a tale of any kind, and trifling though such may be, still they have an end to serve in the delineation of character, and so my readers must forgive the occasional introduction of little common occurrences of daily life. Instance: it is nearly dinner time, and there is Arthur caught by his aunt in the conservatory, knife in hand, bending over her choicest flowers.

"Thief! thief!" exclaimed she, laughing.

"Oh, aunt, I just wanted you."

"So I see, and quite time I came; well, what is it?"

"Oh, only may I take this bunch of rosebuds, and out that Cape jessamine, they will look so pretty together."

"Yes, certainly; they will look lovely, but what are you then going to do with them?"

And aunt Rhoda looked mischievously at him, and he cautiously turned his back towards her ere he replied, with an attempted 'careless air, "Oh, I chanced to overhear Langdon telling Miss Bertram about some of our Easter decorations, and she said Cape jessamine was one of her favourite flowers, so I thought you would like her to have this one; and then those roses looked made to go round it, so I was going to ask you to let her have them."

"Well, here she comes, so suppose you go and give them to her; put a few pieces of this adiantum round it; there, now it makes a perfect nosegay, I think; lend me your knife, I want to take off a few dead bits here." So aunt Rhoda stayed in the conservatory till dinner was announced, she found so many faded leaves on that particular evening.

Lord Borthwick was better and able to dine with the rest of the party, and afterwards asked for a game of whist, and chose Lilia for his partner, making some personal allusion to her charms as he did so.

"You will find me but an indifferent partner, I fear."

"You will not find me such," responded he, with an air of gallantry, "no one could be 'indifferent' when opposite to *you*, and where I a younger man, I would try to say something respecting the substantive 'partner' as well as its adjective 'indifferent.'"

Lilia laughed a light laugh at his words, and busied herself in preparing the card-table, while Arthur, kept for a time aloof, for his father's words had unpleasantly increased the coloric of his complexion. Seated soon after by Lilia's side, he perceived, to his great distress, that the lovely Cape jessamine had departed from the nosegay, with which

he had adorned her before dinner ; and looking into the farther drawing-room, he perceived Langdon quietly seated by a small table sketching the identical flower, which he had propped up against the standard of the lamp. No wonder poor Arthur played the wrong card for that trick, and elicited expressions of surprise from his aunt, who had been playing, as she thought, into his hand.

"Hush, hush," said her brother, "Arthur knows what he is about ; we shall see at the end of the game, no doubt, that he had good reasons for what he did, we shall know all about it presently."

Arthur certainly hoped not, and began to doubt in his own mind what course to pursue, fearful of seeming deceitful by not at once confessing his carelessness, and on the other hand spoiling his aunt's play by exposing the contents of his hand ; but that good aunt had forgotten, or at all events seemed to have forgotten, all about it, by the time the odd trick had been played, and Lilia began a conversation with her partner, whilst Arthur made the cards and his aunt dealt, so that he was spared any allusion to the cause of his delinquency, and he tried his best not to let it divert his mind for the future ; but it *was* hard not to feel some curiosity about his flower, and he fancied Lilia read his thoughts, and looked cruelly indifferent to his feelings, and when she wished him good-night, surely there was a coldness in the shake of the hand, unlike her usual style ; and he went to his room worried and unhappy.

The next day no Mr. Langdon made his appearance at the breakfast-table, and Arthur felt that Lilia was watching the door, and had evidently been surprised at his having had family-prayers without him ; but no question was asked, and aunt Rhoda seemed to have quite forgotten his existence, and to be perfectly happy and satisfied so long as her beloved Arthur was near her.

"I think I shall go back to London to-morrow," said he abruptly, *a propos* to nothing that had been said.

"And why?" exclaimed his aunt.

"Oh, I don't see any good in stopping here any longer." It was said in a moody tone, so unlike his customary one, that it provoked the astonished look of his aunt, and the repeated inquiry of why he was cutting his visit home so short this time, when he had promised to make it a long one. He did not reply for a few moments, and Lilia said, half to his aunt and half to him: "Friends don't like to be parted, when Mr. Langdon is gone, Mr. MacDonald must go also."

"Langdon is not gone, only just to breakfast with his father, and I think I shall go down to him presently."

"And not tell him, I do hope," said his aunt, "that you intend leaving us so soon, that would be like sending him away after you had asked him here; but to be sure he can remain at his father's, even if you leave, but I don't understand what you want to go for, just as the country is so lovely, and the fresh air would do you good."

Arthur mused; those words of his aunt about Langdon's remaining in the neighbourhood after he had left it, seemed to awake new ideas in his mind and to change the aspect of affairs. He was hating himself for being jealous of his friend, and yet unable to reason or argue himself out of all his disturbing thoughts, and above all, he knew he was showing off to the worst advantage before the very person he was most desirous of ingratiating himself into favour with; and yet, what was the use of trying to do so, had she not given away the flower he had ventured to hope she would have kept, and so have given him some encouragement, and had not he seen that flower in his friend's room that very

morning? And why was that friend now gone off in such a hurry to talk to his father; he hardly liked to whisper his fancies even to himself, but the new feeling which had so suddenly taken possession of him seemed to have swallowed up all common-sense, and though he frequently told himself so, and condemned his own folly, still he found himself again and again reverting to the one subject, and treasuring up each little word or look of Lilia's, whereby to feed the new-born desires; suddenly he determined not to go to the Rectory, neither to return in such a hurry to London, but remain and try what his true feelings were by a longer acquaintance with the object of his attachment, he therefore devoted himself especially to her amusement all that morning until a message from his father drew him reluctantly away. On his return he asked her if she would mind writing to her mother for him; and on her looking up inquiringly he continued in a hesitating manner, "My father has heard that there is some trouble, I mean some, some—at least he fears the young Morecombes have got into some misfortune, as we hear he has sold out of the army, and his father knew nothing of his intention, and is much vexed at it; and I thought as your mother was at your uncle's, she might be able to let us know if there be any truth in the report which has reached us, or, if it have arisen out of some probable anticipation of the event; you must write guardedly as we don't want to appear to intrude into any private affairs of your relatives, but only that sometimes a third person is of use, and if we could be, why—"

He stopped and looked confusedly out of the window, and Lilia kindly said, "We should all, I am sure, be thankful to you, and have not forgotten your acting as peace-maker before."

The words encouraged him to go on, and he proceeded more fully to explain what he had long been

dreading, that the Morecombes were really getting into great distress, and how much he wished some one could find out all about it, and give a helping hand and word of advice, to save them in time.

"I was thinking about it the other day, when I asked you if you visited them when in Town, as I had hoped you might be of use to Mrs. Morecombe, though I fancy the fault lies more with her husband; you must not mind my saying this of your cousin, but I dare say as you have stayed in the house with him, you must know a little what his character is; there seems to me no stability about it, and I fear a grievous lack of the only stability worth possessing; I saw him frequently just about that time you were alluding to, and I so wished to have introduced Langdon to him, *he* would have had some good influence with him, I fear I had none; but it could not be managed just then. I wish you would help."

"But, how?"

"Oh, a woman with good sense, and a little tact, can always help a fellow-woman."

"But have I those qualities? I would gladly be of use, but I don't know how to set to work about it."

Just as she uttered these words Mr. Joseph Langdon and his father entered the room; the former smiled as he heard them, and turning to the elder Mr. Langdon, said, "Here is one pupil for you; will you tell her what she needs." But Arthur interposed, saying he thought the circumstances of the case would hardly allow of it just then, and aunt Rhoda entering the room, the conversation became more general, and ended in both Langdons remaining to lunch with Lord Borthwick, and a division in the occupation of ladies and gentlemen afterwards, and it was not till late the next afternoon that the subject of the Morecombes could be resumed, and it was then more fully discussed by all the party, and

Arthur explained why he had not wished such a family affair to be known even to their good old pastor; he even rather mistrusted his aunt, as he smilingly told her.

A few days brought a reply from Mrs. Bertram, confirming their worst suspicions. Archibald Morecombe had not only left the army, but left the country it appeared also, for his wife professed ignorance of his whereabouts, and no one else had any clue by which to trace him. The next thing to be thought of, was, what was to become of her; but all naturally supposed she would return to her parents, but of *her* plans they could tell but little, as the intercourse between the Morecombes and Watsons had become nearly extinct; the gentlemen meeting occasionally for business, or accidentally in their rides, but the ladies ceased even to call on each other. Lady Morecombe never entirely forgave the Watsons for what she supposed was their share in the marriage, and Mrs. Watson still felt indignant at the neglect shown to her daughter. Some more correspondence passed between Mrs. Bertram and her daughter on the subject, and then came a letter with a special request from Sir Peter that Lilia would join her mother at his house and spend the few remaining days of her visit there together.

Mrs. Bertram wrote:—"I have prevented this invitation from being sent to you long ago, but can ward it off no more. I sadly fear, my dear child, that it will be far from agreeable to you to come here, so if you can frame any reasonable excuse, you are at liberty, so far as I am concerned, to do so; but otherwise, and if you do not much dislike it, I can only say you will be giving pleasure to your uncle, who has often expressed a great wish to see you again, and I need say nothing of the delight it will be to myself to have you here with me."

Lilia hastily read the letter through when it

arrived at breakfast time, and then retreated to the drawing room, more quietly to think over its contents, when the door gently opened and Mr. Langdon entered. He took no apparent notice of her, but commenced searching that part of the room in which he had been reading the evening before; and not finding what he wanted, was leaving, when Lilia enquired if he were looking for a small box of coloured chalks which she had seen aunt Rhoda put carefully away in one of the cabinets. On receiving an answer in the affirmative, she arose and found it for him, and in giving it, dropped her mother's envelope, which he picked up and gave her, and thus recognising the hand-writing, asking if there were any more tidings of the Morecombes.

Lilia answered "No; but her mother had written for her to go there, and perhaps she might then learn more about them."

"And when do you leave?" he asked in an indifferant tone.

"I don't know when I am to go."

The words and tone rather surprised her hearer, whose ear was well attuned to such things, and he instantly perceived some trace of reluctance and perhaps even of sorrow, in her voice. This was enough to arrest him, so instead of leaving the room, he paused a moment by her side, and then said softly.

"Are you in any *trouble* about this rather sudden departure? I fear so, because I know otherwise you would be glad to rejoin your mother."

Lilia did not immediately reply, and mistaking the cause of her silence, he said in a tenderly parental manner, "Forgive me, Miss Bertram, if I have seemed intrusive, but I am so much more accustomed to deal with sorrow, than with joy, that your accents arrested me, and almost unconsciously to myself I spoke."

So saying, he began to move away, when Lilia started up, and exclaimed, "Oh! don't go, please don't misunderstand me; I would thankfully tell you what it is troubles me, only it seems such a trifle that I am ashamed of it. It is only that I have a particular dislike to going to Morecombe Park, and it is not my mother but my uncle who wants me to come,"

"And so you hesitate, because you don't love your uncle so much as your mother, and therefore the act of going becomes a trial, which it otherwise would not be. Is it so?" And the sweet encouraging smile which accompanied the words set Lilia fully at her ease with the interrogator, and although her cheek was slightly flushed, she at once confessed to having no desire to please her uncle for whom she so little cared, whereas she would gladly have done anything for the mother she loved had *she* especially expressed any wish in the matter, but being left to her own choice, had made the decision difficult.

"Shall I tell you one simple rule for guidance in even trifles?"

Lilia's look was reply sufficient, so he continued in a low, reverential tone, "You would think anything a pleasure you could do for your mother, because you love her. Try and think Who orders all our trials, even trifling ones, for us, and then if we love Him more than our mother, we shall find pleasure even in acts of self-denial for His sake." He paused a moment and then said, "Yes, I think you ought to go if your uncle wish it, and depend upon it, the trial, whatever it may be, will become lighter when met in the pathway of duty, and perhaps you may be permitted some day, to see a reason why this visit should occur at this special time; at all events, let your faith believe that there is such, and go and act accordingly."

The few words were enough to determine Lilia as

to her future conduct. She wrote at once to her mother, fixing the day for her departure, and then went and gently broke the news to Aunt Rhoda, who was much disappointed at learning that she was so soon to lose the society of the young girl who had entwined herself round her heart, that heart that would never grow old, let its owner attain whatever age she might.

The morning for the parting arrived, and poor Arthur's state of mind was most unhappy. Ever since the moment he knew Lilia was to leave he had been in a constant state of indecision; one moment determining to have his fate known by asking for her love, and the next being utterly overcome by his painful shyness. He heard the carriage leave the stable yard, and knew that in a few moments it would be rolling away and carrying her far from him, perhaps never to meet again; it was his last chance, and in a fit of desperation he determined to risk it. Madly rushing into the conservatory, and almost tearing an unhappy Cape jessamine from its stem, he entered the dining-room, where he knew he should find Lilia fully equipped for her departure, having partaken of a hasty luncheon. She was alone, the moment seemed favourable.

"Will you *keep* this," he cried, "and not give it to Langdon or any one?"

She started and coloured, and knew not what to reply to this sudden action and strange words.

Seizing both her hands in his, he pressed the flower into them, saying in a tone trembling with passionate love, "Lilia, dear Lilia, throw my flower away if you will; but do not let those lips *speak* the destruction of my hopes. Write to me."

Aunt Rhoda's voice was heard in the hall, the door opened, the carriage was announced, all was bustle, confusion and parting, and—Lilia was gone.

CHAPTER XIV.

"The way to argue down a vice, is not to tell lies about it, to say it has no attraction, when everybody knows it has; but rather to let it make out its case, just as it certainly will in the moment of temptation, and then meet it with the weapons furnished by the Divine armoury."—*The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table*.

O. W. HOLMES.

The traveller on leaving London and proceeding through what are called the suburbs of the great metropolis, will soon find himself amongst a class of houses, quite different to any he has been accustomed to; their number will gradually decrease, and their appearance betoken a less affluent set of inhabitants. Here and there an old and somewhat low-pitched house seems to tell that the locality had been peopled in years gone by, but the generality speak of newness, smartness, vulgarity, and poverty, each one losing in newness and gaining in poverty as we advance. It was in one of the latter, and in a more isolated position than any of the previous ones, that a woman sat late in the evening by an open window, though she herself was almost hidden by the thick clustering ivy which had gathered round it; she was at work, but her work often lay unheeded in her lap, and large tears gathered to her eyes and fell upon it; then she would brush them away and look anxiously up the road for some minutes, start if she heard the slightest sound of approaching footsteps, and once she rose, and going to the door, nervously felt the bolts, as if to assure herself she was safe from all intrusion, and then retreating behind her ivy screen, recommence her oft-neglected work. Pale, thin, haggard, and prematurely old, who could re-

cognise, in that unhappy woman, the bright girl we first knew, hanging over her father's gate, and watching for him, as lover, whom now as husband, she watched for with such different feelings, and under such different circumstances. Not that Adelaide had ceased to love her husband, but all the trust, and higher feelings for his character, had long since ceased to exist, and she knew much that was wrong in him, and she feared more. Why did he hide away from every one as now? She had made no objection to his proposal of leaving their expensive house when she found he had no means to continue their former expenses; but it was so great a change to have been brought mysteriously by night away from it, and to be left day after day alone in this old house, far from all she knew or cared for. Her very letters went and came, she knew not how; her husband had told her that it was absolutely necessary for the present, and the secrecy about all his plans and movements, pained her far more than the loss of all her home luxuries. Day deepened into night, still she sat on, keeping her lonely watch by that ivied window. At last, fairly worn out, she cautiously closed and fastened the little casement, and flung herself on the horse-hair sofa at the far end of the room. How long she slept she knew not, but a slight scratching noise aroused her, she started, the room was quite dark; she listened, was there a tapping at the window, or was it but the beating of her own heart. There was the scratching noise again, some horrid rat going round the wainscot; no, it was outside the house. There it was again, like a man's hand feeling for the door-latch. Yes, that must be it; she moved forwards to strike a light, but then hesitated; suppose it was not he. Should she arouse the old woman who slept up-stairs and was her only fellow inhabitant of the place. No; she would creep to the door and listen, and not open it unless it were

his voice she knew so well. Stealthily she moved from the room, and felt her way through the dark passage to the door; when there, she availed herself of the tiny hole which had, doubtless, been bored in long ages past to enable the inmates of the house, to inspect all visitors, before admitting them; but it was of little avail to-night, clouds were sweeping across the sky and hiding even the stars from aiding her, and there was no friendly moon: she had sunk long ago. So there poor Adèle stood listening and hoping for some sign by which she might venture to open the door. After a brief moment, which seemed to her an age, she heard a rose tree's branches bend against the wall, and recognised more distinctly the scratching noise which had aroused her, then a footstep and then a low whistle, which made her heart leap with thankfulness, and instantly answering to the signal, she struck the light she held in her hand, and opening the door, admitted her husband, who spoke not till the door was again carefully rebarred, and the two seated side by side in that desolate little chamber.

His manner was more kind towards her than it had been of late, and Adèle felt rejoiced, and half trembled as she felt it to be such. It was pleasure to hear it, but she almost feared it betokened some coming request, which perhaps she would be unable to comply with. Too often throughout her married life had such been the case, and too often had her conscience afterwards bitterly upbraided her for the weakness of her concessions. Therefore did she now sit by her husband's side, saddened by the thought that she should have most likely first to refuse his request, and then in all probability, be driven to grant it, even whilst blaming herself for so doing. Wrong, decidedly wrong, as every one knows; and how readily do we blame those who weakly act, but we must ourselves first be similarly tried, ere we severely condemn others.

"Addy, darling," began her husband, "this is a wretched sort of life for you. I have been thinking of all sorts of plans to change it, and to-day hope I have hit upon one that would be a desirable undertaking, of course it would require some capital."

Addy's cheek paled at those words, and she felt some proposed fresh appeal to her parents would next be demanded of her, but to her infinite relief her husband continued,

"I met a man to-day who will join and help me in it; I should like your father's sanction, and perhaps he might like also to join with us."

Addy's eyes brightened, and she looked up smilingly and said, "Oh, that would be very nice. If papa approves and joins, I shall be so happy."

There was no responding smile on her husband's lips, and he remained silent for some time, and seemed only intent on the supper which was always ready for him whenever he returned from his mysterious absences. Presently he roused himself to the fact he was eating alone, and urged upon his wife the propriety of joining in his repast; but she was too intent upon his former words to give much heed to the latter, until repeated, when she mechanically took some food, and not able to endure the silence longer, timidly enquired what the proposed plan was to be.

"Well, I think I must go down and see your father about it, the letter you had yesterday said he was at home."

"Yes, he is at home, and, and,"—Addy hesitated, and then said hurriedly, "they want me to come to them; can't I go with you?"

"Not to-morrow, dear," he replied, "but you shall soon." And his voice slightly faltered, as he said the words; but he soon resumed in his ordinary tone, "I must travel by night, and that would be bad for you. I shall be busy in town with my friend,

and I can't yet tell when I can exactly arrange to go. So don't write and say anything about it; and now go to bed, and get some rest, you look shockingly tired."

After Adèle had left the room, her husband busied himself for some time in arranging and packing a large box, and then carefully locking it and pocketing the key, he returned to his room, where he remained during the whole of the next day, his wife attending on him, so that even the one servant they had, was totally unaware of his existence in the house; her old age and deafness being the chief inducements to the Morecombes for engaging her services, and she was only too glad to come for the merest trifle, as those particular qualities which rendered her a suitable servant to them, were not such as recommended her to the generality of employers! Towards night Archibald Morecombe arose, and throwing a large loose coat over his shoulders, and dragging his hat well over his eyes, bid farewell to his wife, and sallied forth.

He had not gone far along the road before a cart overtook him, the driver slackened his pace as he passed, and after going on for some few paces, pulled up, whistled, as if to a dog, and then said "Where is he?"

"Here, all right," was the expected response from Archibald Morecombe, who immediately jumped up by the side of his friend and the two drove quietly off towards London. The conversation was conducted in a low undertone, until they reached the station, where, taking a ticket for the night mail, they parted. Archibald to seek the dwelling of his father-in-law, and his companion to make some preparations for their future, promising to meet him on his return.

The sun was gilding the early autumnal tints in Morecombe Park, when the heir to that lovely spot reached the nearest station to it. The thought pressed heavily upon him of that day, when with the spirited

four-in-hand he had dashed up to its gates, and received the congratulations and homage of all his father's friends and tenantry. Oh! how was all now changed, and he felt bitterly towards his parents, and for a moment forgot all they *had* done for him, in the extravagance of his wishes that they would do more. Then as his eye wandered over many loved spots of his boyhood, he scarcely repressed a deep-drawn sigh, and fearing lest he might attract the notice of his fellow travellers, he pulled his hat more over his eyes, and pretended sleep. Arrived at the station, he hurriedly leapt out of the carriage, gave up his ticket, and was away over the fields, almost before the rest of the passengers had become aware that the train had stopped.

Mr. and Mrs. Watson were considerably astonished when they came down to their breakfast that morning to find their early visitor, and feared bad news of their daughter; but their alarms were soon set at rest on that score, and only left to imagine what fresh evil had befallen their unfortunate son-in-law, as experience had long since taught them, that his visits and letters were but demands on their purse, consequent on some folly or extravagance. The greeting was, therefore, not the most cordial, and as soon as Mrs. Watson had left the room, her husband rose, saying,

"You may as well come into my study at once, and tell me what you have come for."

The quiet tone took Archibald by surprise, and as he followed the speaker, he felt all his prepared speeches fading from his memory. Mr. Watson was pre-eminently a business man, and when Archibald Morecombe broached his plan of joining a party for emigration, showed it was not a very carefully concocted plan.

"Have you asked your father about it?"

"No, certainly not; what would be the use of it?"

"I don't know what *use* you may consider it, but it is unquestionably your *duty*, and I don't see how you can possibly entertain the idea of leaving the country without first obtaining his permission."

The young man paused awhile, and then said, "I believe the only way to soften his heart would be by his knowing! I was actually gone, then, perhaps, he would help me again."

Mr. Watson took no notice of this speech, its ingratitude to a father who had often helped him, and who had impoverished himself for him, was too apparent, and often had Mr. Watson in vain tried to make it appear so to his insatiable son-in-law; but each time they met or corresponded the heart of the one who had been *educated* to selfishness showed evident tokens of becoming harder and harder, and as a last hope Mr. Watson now felt determined to make one more vigorous effort to save him by effecting a meeting between the recreant son and the weak-minded but affectionate parents. During Mrs. Bertram's stay at the Park some change for the better had been visible in the tone of mind of both her brother and his vain wife, and the Watsons had had many kind and friendly visits from Mrs. Bertram since the letters which had been sent by her daughter from Nuns-horton, and therefore many things seemed more combining to make towards the reconciliation of all parties, if only a hope could be entertained of any lasting improvement in the reckless spendthrift.

"Will you go now, at once, and see your father? Tell him all you have told me, and if he agree to your plans and we can see that they are feasible, I promise you I will advance you a sufficient sum to start you with, and as we agreed just now, you will leave your wife with us until your return. Now, go, and be open and straightforward with your father. Tell him *all* your difficulties, and then return here and let us see what your next step shall be."

Mr. Watson's quiet, determined manner awed the young man, and feeling there would be nothing gained by any attempt at arguing with him, he reluctantly took his hat and departed. Mr. Watson went to seek his wife to tell her what the conversation had been. The mother's heart rejoiced at the thought of having her daughter at home again, and was only thankful that she should be then rid of a husband who had not proved such as she had hoped to have found in the handsome son of Sir Peter Morecombe.

That unhappy son, the victim in a great measure of his parents' folly, was now approaching the home of his childhood with strangely mixed feelings. Selfishness had indeed been the root of all his sin. An only child, he had always been allowed by his weak parents to have his own way in everything, no one was ever to contradict his wilful temper, and every indulgence was permitted him; the only attempt at thwarting him was when his will became decidedly opposed to that of his parents, or when wearied out with his petulance, they would in an evil moment punish him with some passion. Such an education was now reaping sad fruit, and the man was but a fuller development of the child.

Archibald determined to seek his mother first, and try and work upon her feelings, so ascending the stairs he gently opened her boudoir door, and stood before her. "Mother," he said, "you have been ill;" and for a moment his conscience smote him, for he knew he had been the cause, but he steeled himself to his better feelings and determined to win his way as he had been accustomed to do, by taking the upper hand, and making his weak parents succumb to his stronger will and determination.

Lady Morecombe gave a faint scream as her son thus unexpectedly presented himself before her. "Archie, why did you not let me know you were coming; I hope you have not brought that wife of yours with you?"

The speech irritated him, and he answered angrily, "And what if I have? you have tried to drive me away from my natural home and those who ought to love me most, and now I suppose you would wish to separate me from another who loves me. Well, don't distress yourself about this visit, it is the last you will have from me; I have come to wish you good-bye, and mean to leave the country for ever. Since you and my father have cast me off, there is no help for me, and you virtually banish me from my native land."

He stopped, and his mother burst into tears, and sobbed forth, "Oh! Archie, Archie; I think you were born to be a curse to us. I have done everything for you, and this is your return. You have broken my heart, and I—I—" And a violent fit of weeping prevented all further utterance.

At this moment, Sir Peter having learnt from the servants of his son's arrival, hastened to his wife's room, dreading the meeting, and feeling *her* presence would help him through it. Unfortunately entering the room at this moment, his kinder feelings towards his son were instantly banished, and he angrily exclaimed, "What do you mean by thus coming here to worry and excite your poor mother? She has been getting better lately, and now here are you, come to undo all the good." He stopped suddenly as the thought crossed his mind *who* had been doing all the good to his wife, and the remembrance of his gentle sister's words, whose influence had not yet faded from his heart, made him at once determined to subdue his anger and try the effect of different language on his son. In a constrained voice, and with evident effort he said, "Archibald come down into my room and have a talk with me; leave your mother for the present, you are only doing her harm." And glad to escape the sight of his wife's tears, he hurried from the room, followed by his

son, who paused one moment to say, in a softened voice, "Mother, I shall come up and see you again before I go. Don't let your last words to your only child be harsh ones. We may never meet again."

The tone, the words, quite overcame Lady Morecombe, and holding out her hand to her son, drew him towards her, and kissed him affectionately, saying, "My dear boy, why do you come here talking in this way. There, go with your father, and don't irritate him, he is more favourably inclined towards you now; your aunt has been talking to him. I suppose she sent you here?"

Archibald looked surprised at the words, but did not wait for an explanation, as he was anxious for the interview with his father to be over. He found less difficulty with the weak-minded baronet than with the clear-headed, business man who had that morning found so many objections to his scheme.

Sir Peter thought that a little temporary banishment from the temptations of a London life and evil counsellors around him there, might be beneficial to his son, and promised to assist him with some money for starting, concluding with his usual speech, "I will ask Watson about it, and let you know."

"That won't do, father; I must have your answer, and the means for going *to-day*. All the plans are arranged, and I must start with the rest; time and tide wait for no man."

Archibald was getting alarmed lest a conference between his father and Mr. Watson should terminate in a manner hostile to his views; but here his father was determined, and like most weak men, the more he was opposed the more obstinate he became; besides there was another reason which pride would not let him say, and Sir Peter Morecombe would not confess, even to his son, that his own carelessness had reduced his income so largely, that he really was unable at the time to assist him. Had he been open

and honest and told his difficulties, it might have had a good effect upon one who had hitherto considered all the reluctantly given aid, bestowed upon him, to have arisen from any cause but the true one; never refused any demand in childhood, he bitterly complained of the altered concessions in manhood, and left his home and his parents with a heart-sick sensation that he was leaving those he ought most to love, with a barrier of ill feeling between them. He had failed in obtaining the help he had sought, and he knew from his morning's conversation with Mr. Watson, that there was but little chance of securing assistance from him, unless he could prove to his satisfaction that it would be properly and advantageously expended. What was to be done? How avoid the debt, difficulty, and disgrace which threatened to overwhelm him?

CHAPTER XV.

"'Twas but one little drop of sin
We saw this morning enter in,
And lo! at eventide the world is drown'd."—
SEXUAGESIMA SUNDAY.

Archibald Morecombe had begun his walk back to Mr. Watson's, by indulging in hard thoughts of his parents, and of every one who did not conduce to his self-indulgent habits; instead of trying to discover wherein lay his own faults, he thus encouraged their growth, and by the time he had reached his father-in-law's he had hardened his heart against every feeling, but the one determination to obtain more money from him. The Watsons had driven into the

neighbouring town, supposing that Sir Peter would naturally keep his son to luncheon, but the son having failed in the object of his visit there, had at once returned, and now sought to obtain from Mr. Watson what Sir Peter had refused. Tired and miserable he flung himself on the sofa in the study, and was soon fast asleep. The day was closing in when he was aroused by the return of the carriage, and soon after Mr. Watson entered the room, and seating himself, asked what success his morning visit to the Hall had produced?

"Just nothing at all. What I expected," was the moody reply.

"Did you tell Sir Peter what your plans were?"

"Yes, and he partly agreed with me that it would be the best thing for me to do; but what's the good of words, I want deeds, and if neither of you will help me I must go to the dogs—to the gallows most likely."

"Now, Morecombe, don't talk like a fool; besides, you drive me to say it, you talk like a most ungrateful man. Remember you married my daughter without consent—without even asking it; but there, I confess she was almost as much to blame as you, I say almost, because women are weaker than we are, and therefore when the stronger lead the weaker into sin, the stronger are the most wicked. I know this is not the world's creed, but I believe it to be the Bible's, therefore, while I do not wish to excuse my child, still, just now, I want to put your sin plainly before you."

Archibald began to express his dislike to this turn the conversation had taken, but he checked himself, thinking it better to let Mr. Watson have his talk out, and thus hoping he might thereby be the gainer in the end. So, without further interruption, Mr. Watson continued his lecture, plainly putting before his hearer how that he had been very fairly started in the world; he reminded him, that after much

trouble he had induced Sir Peter to give him the same allowance as his wife had received from her parents. "I say nothing of your pay, as I always considered that more than swallowed up by the expenses of the army; but I do say, that had you been but prudently careful, you might have lived comfortably on your income. Again and again have you come to us to get you out of debt, and as a matter of principle, I will do it no longer. I can believe neither in your honesty nor your truth. When Mr. MacDonald came here for you, he said you had promised to give up your extravagancies, and that you had fully told him of all your debts; and when we had paid them and started you afresh, what did we discover? That you had yet more of which we knew nothing. Then we heard that Mr. MacDonald had again been helping you, and I understood, at his persuasion, you had promised to leave your house in Town for a less expensive one elsewhere. Instead of being open with me in this matter, there has been a mystery over it all, and the only conclusion I can arrive at, is that you have not yet told us the truth,—that you are even now hiding away from your creditors. Now, what you call your debts of honour—mark you—I'll have nothing to do with such; those who are fools enough to gamble with you, may suffer for their pains; but I don't wish that honest tradespeople should be the losers, and therefore I now make this one last proposal to you. Make out a list of all your just debts, and promise me you will by this day week be out of the country—there are plenty of openings in our colonies, and the Emigration Society will send you out, and I will see to your outfit—and send your wife to me, and if at the end of five years you can send me a respectable report of yourself, I will contrive means for your return. Now, don't answer in a hurry—go back and think the matter well over, and send me a written promise. Agree to

this, and all may yet be well ; but go on as you now are, and I see nothing but ruin—body and soul—before you, and I will not be the man to help you on to such ruin, which I fear I should be, did I encourage you any longer by my assistance with money, whenever you asked for it. It would be wrong to you and your wife. So remember, this is my last offer of help to you. And now get me my cheque-book out of that drawer ; here, this is the key ; and give me my slippers, for these boots hurt me, and I feel pain in all this side still, and can't move about as well as I did ; I shall never be the man again that I was before that horrid accident. Ah ! my poor daughter was a treasure to me then, she was quite a clerk to me and saved me ;" he stopped as Archbald handed him a cheque book, but opening it said "Oh ! not this one, get the one from the other side, this one is my old one. Ah ! so it is, full of Addy's work." The father's eyes moistened as he looked at it, then he half muttered to himself "By the way I never told the bankers . . . but it don't signify." Then looking up he said "that's the right one, give it me, and the inkstand, and here now, I am going to sign this for twenty-five for you, and when you send me your accounts and promise to be off, I will send you more. You may set to work at once and arrange your affairs, for I shall have some money paid into the bank the end of this month, and if your debts are not of an outrageous kind I will see to their liquidation ; but remember, it is the last time, and if you don't agree to all this never shew your face inside these doors again," and Mr. Watson's voice and look became fiercely stern as he uttered the last words ; then rising with some difficulty, he left the room, saying "I give you a little time to think it over, and hope you may come to your right senses and a proper conclusion to my suggestion. Mr. Watson was more excited than he had felt for years, and fearing lest he

might say more than was judicious, he determined at once to retire and calm himself before any further conversation took place. The doctors had warned him when recovering from his accident, that the long state of unconsciousness he had been in, had, in some degree, injured the brain, and he must be very careful or it might lead to most serious results, and therefore at this moment, Mr. Watson feeling his head beginning to throb violently, at once took himself off to perfect quiet in his own room, and there leaning back in a large arm chair, he determined not even to think of the excitement he had gone through, but to remain in a state of rest until fit to return to Archibald, and take his final leave of him.

Archibald was left alone, standing by the table, on which lay the two cheque books. The ink was yet wet on the newly signed leaf, the other half of which he held in his hand. He looked at it, muttered "Twenty-five—humph—how mean : might just as well have made it a hundred whilst he was about it." Presently he took up the old book and turned over the leaves and read again large sums, signed with the stamp by Adèle's hand. Then his eye fell on the clean pages of the new book—there seemed plenty of them. Ah ! if Adèle could sign all those for him—he started—there seemed a voice close by his ear—he shuddered at the words it seemed to say ; hastily putting down the books, he turned from the table and towards the window ; standing there and looking out on the rich fields, that stretching far away, all called Mr. Watson "master," the thought came "And all this must be Adele's some day, and yet they grudge us help now, just when we want it—a little gold would be so useful. Gold ! I wonder if—if he have left any gold in that drawer ; but no—that would look uncommonly like stealing. Yes, stealing, a nasty, vulgar word. Still, the money is unquestionably Adèle's, to a great extent. It's the duty of parents to

provide for their children, and if they don't—really I think it's my duty to see to it in some way or other." He turned from the window and approached the table—there lay the cheque books. Again he took them up; the leaf next to the one that had so lately been extricated seemed to have been somewhat loosened by the nervous handling of Mr. Watson. Archibald took hold of it and paused. Again he fancied he heard a voice whispering to him "It's Adèle's by right, you can but take it to her; she can do as she likes with it." Again he paused, and his better feelings strove to be heard, but he stifled them at once, saying to himself "Well, suppose I take it, can't be any harm; I'm not obliged to use it because I have it." A noise alarmed him—he's coming—and seizing the book he quickly extricated the leaf and placed it in his pocket book, with the other that Mr. Watson had filled up for him, and leaving the table remained by the window a few moments in thought, and then taking up his hat and cloak, he left the room and went in search of Mrs. Watson, and told her he must now wish her good bye, as he wanted to catch the next train to London. There was something so strange and unnatural in the tone of his voice that Mrs. Watson looked earnestly at him, and then said, "Archibald, what's the matter with you? I am certain there is something fearfully wrong, and you won't tell me; if you won't let Adèle come to me, I insist upon it, I'll go to her. You have no right to keep a mother away from her child. I know she is ill, and I *will* be with her."

"Mother," said Archibald sadly, "you shall have your child very soon. Wish me good bye, I may never see you again. Here comes Mr. Watson, he will tell you all." And advancing towards him he said, hurriedly, "You shall hear of my plans soon, I can't stop longer. Good bye." And almost before they could realise his words he had left the house,

and they stood silent and wondering at the strangeness of his unsatisfactory visit.

Later in the evening Mr. Watson explained, as far as he was able, all he knew of Morecombe's intentions, and added what had been his own advice and words. At first Mrs. Watson thought it sounded harsh, and said, "No wonder he looked so odd when he said good bye; I never saw such a strange, wild look as he had, quite frightened me. Oh! I *shall* be glad to have dear Addy at home again, and think your plan is after all a good one; I am only afraid she won't like to leave that husband of hers, that's my only fear."

So sat and talked the parents, whilst their child sat at her usual post by the window, watching for the return of her husband. Presently a man's step was heard, but in a moment she felt sure it was not her husband's. She closed the window and drew back into the further corner of the room. A rap was heard at the door, but she did not speak nor stir; another and another still louder, and she began to fear lest even the deaf servant should hear it; but after awhile the knocking ceased, and to Adèle's horror the step was heard approaching the window. Closer and closer did she crouch into her corner, and fancied she almost felt the strange breath through the panes of glass against which the man's face was pressed. Would he hear her heart beat? In vain she tried to still the loud throbs that shook her whole person. With the greatest difficulty she prevented herself from giving vent to an hysterical scream when the face was withdrawn, and the steps were heard slowly retreating, 'till the sound died away in the distance. Adèle felt that she could endure this state of existence no longer, and when, late in the night, her husband's well-known signal was heard, she fell into his arms, and declared she must die if left longer in this lonely house, with the mystery of hiding ever

before her. Archibald replied, gently, that he had been making arrangements for her to leave it very soon, and after asking particularly what sort of man it was that had been to the house, he said "Adèle, you shall know all,—listen to me and say if you will help me. I have been, as you know, unfortunate, and now I am so largely in debt, and no doubt, but that man came to find me and take me to prison." Adèle shuddered and hid her face on her husband's shoulder, and he continued, "I have been to both our parents and asked them to help us, and your father took a leaf out of his cheque book and,"—Archibald hesitated, he had never told a direct lie, though prevaricated often and often, so changing his tactics, he drew the blank cheque from his pocket, and said "Here, Adèle, you have often stamped these for your father, so now you can do it again. It is left a blank and you have that lithographed copy of your father's hand and can stamp this, and go and get the money from the bank, pay our creditors, and we shall be free from all further misery."

"Oh! how delightful," exclaimed Adèle in the first joyful moment, but the next instant her tone changed and she said anxiously, "I stamp it, Oh! Archy, then Papa is ill again, for I have not stamped one since we married."

Archibald paused,—“No, not exactly ill, but certainly he did not look very well; but you shall go to them soon, and then you can nurse him up and make him well. Here, just do this, and then be off to bed.”

Addy's eyes were full of tears, she could only think of her father as ill and suffering, and she stamped the paper and left the room, without noticing the deathlike paleness that spread over the countenance of her husband, as the guiltiness of his act stood like a living horror before him.

The next day a vain search was instituted after the

Morecombes; the house was untenanted, and no trace of their whereabouts could be found.

Weeks passed away, when one morning a young man was seen hurrying on board a ship, at Liverpool. He was pale and haggard, and a strange wildness was in his eye. "Quick Sir, quick," exclaimed a sailor, as he drew away the plank on which he stepped, and jumping forward was caught by a stout, determined looking man, who at once drew him towards the aft part of the ship, saying "Why, Jones, we all thought you meant to play us false after all. How late you are. Got the money all right, eh?"

Archibald Morecombe gasped out his reply, and sank on a coil of ropes, and hid his face in his hands.

"Come don't be chicken-hearted now," and his companion drew out of his pocket a flask of brandy and gave it to him, and then seating himself beside him, began after his own style to attempt to comfort him—"Just think, my dear fellow, it really was no use for you to remain any longer in England, your debts were more than he would pay for you, so instead of the money going for that, you have only taken it in just another way for yourself. If our last speculation had not so terribly miscarried, all might have been different; but we can't help the Fates—what must be, must, and there's an end of it."

"Oh! my poor wife," sobbed out the wretched man.

"Don't now worry about her, she'll do much better without you, and you can write and tell her how well you are getting on, so soon as the fuss of our going is all blown over. Now don't worry. I say, you'll raise suspicions on board; and you may rest satisfied her parents will take good care of her. Oh! yes, she'll be all right, and you with her again some day."

Alas! for poor Adèle, she sat and watched long in vain for her husband's return, and was at last bethinking herself of starting for her home, first leaving her address with their landlady in case of any letters

coming for her, or that her husband might come back. She had tried to remember some hope he had held out of being with her again soon; but she could only recall vague words, and chiefly such as would lead her to fear he had not really intended to return. With these thoughts she packed up a few things, and determined to leave Liverpool by the very next train to Town, when a circumstance occurred which totally altered the whole future of her existence.

CHAPTER XVI.

"The right Christian mind will find its own image wherever it exists; it will seek for what it loves, and draw it out of all dens and caverns, and it will believe in its being, often when it cannot see it. It will lie lovingly over all the faults and rough places of the human heart, as the snow from Heaven over the hard mountain rocks."—MODERN PAINTERS, Vol. 2.

Mrs. Archibald Morecombe had just settled her account with her landlady, and was returning to her own room, when she was startled by hearing her own name, and looking round saw a stranger standing at the open door, who then repeated his question, whether she were lodging there. She at once replied in the affirmative, and feeling certain it must be some one with a message from her husband, invited him in and eagerly asked for his tidings. The man hesitated, and then said "I know nothing of Mr. Morecombe, and was about to ask you concerning him." Adèle's look of surprise puzzled him, and her next question seemed still more to add to his difficulty, for she en-

quired for what purpose had he then called on her. The man looked suspiciously round the room, then walked to the door and closed it, saying as he did so, "My business with you, Madam, is of a strictly private nature, and I should be glad if you could give me some satisfactory reply to a question I have to put to you." He then drew from his pocket the unlucky cheque, and placing it on the table before her, asked her if it were her father's own signature.

Adèle's confusion increased, as her interrogator, resting his hand firmly on the paper, looked steadily into her face, and she answered "No, not exactly, perhaps; but—" and suddenly drawing back a few paces, as a fresh thought struck her, she indignantly exclaimed "I should like to know what right *you* have to enter my house and catechise me in this manner? Surely, a father and daughter may have money transactions between them, without a stranger coming to interfere in the matter."

The man smiled a hard smile as he looked at her, and said "Madam, it's no use to brave the thing out in this way with me, there lies the paper, *supposed* to have been signed by Mr. Watson, but in *reality* signed by you. I am but obeying my orders in thus coming here and charging you with it."

"What do you charge me with?" enquired Adèle.

A few moments of intense silence ensued, and then in a calm, cold, deliberate voice came the words "Forgery, or something very like it; at all events, obtaining money under false pretences, and here," drawing a paper from his pocket, "here is my warrant for your apprehension. You must at once come with me to London; but keep your own counsel, and be quiet. I shall put no restraint on you. You can travel as only a companion of mine, but you must not attempt to escape me, or it will be the worse for you; I shall not lose sight of you until I have placed you in safe custody. You may write to your friends and

say—" He stopped short, for his words were unheeded; with one wild scream, as the fearful truth flashed upon her, Adèle sank fainting on the floor.

The noise attracted the woman of the house, who came rushing in, and raised her lodger in her arms, whilst she heaped all manner of imprecations on the head of the intruder. "How could he dare come and upset such a pretty lady, who had just paid her rent quite handsomely. If he did not take himself off at once she would have the police after him."

The man took no notice of her words, but seemed somewhat touched by the scene, for turning towards the door, he said "Look here, I'm going to seat myself in the hall; just help that poor creature to get ready, for come with me she *must*, so there's an end of it, and the sooner the better."

He had not long to wait, for the door was gently opened by Adèle herself, saying in a tone of forced calmness, "I am quite ready, get a cab."

"I must trouble your landlady to do that, as I can not lose sight of you."

Adèle shrank back shuddering, and seeing the kind hearted woman again beginning a torrent of invectives, laid her hand quietly on her shoulder, saying "My kind friend, it's no use, please do as he says, and let me go. I am not so wicked as he takes me to be, and it will be best to make no fuss."

The woman looked astonished, and muttering she was an angel to bear it as she did, moved away in search of a cab, and soon finding one, Adèle and her strange companion entered it, and in a very short time were rushing away in an Express train to London. In a state of half stupor, poor Adèle was conveyed to her cell, a succession of fainting fits had rendered her almost unconscious of all that occurred, and late in the night she roused to a sense of something having happened, but what she could not tell, and looking round to be certain she was not dreaming, she became aware

of the reality of her situation. All the past came rushing like a torrent of lava over her brain. Yes—here she was—a degraded prisoner. What must now her future be? A scorned and hated outcast from society. Oh! would her parents even forsake her; she could be but henceforth a disgrace to their respectable name. And oh! bitterest thought of all, could it, oh! could it, indeed be, that her own father had so turned against her, as to have ordered her arrest. Yes, it must be so, how else could her act have been known. And her husband; where was he? Arrested also? Who could she ask, how could she tell what had become of him? One thing she mentally resolved that no syllable from her lips should ever betray the share he had had in the crime for which she had been apprehended. No, she had done it, and she would bear the blame; she was thankful now that he had left the house before the dreadful stranger arrived. True woman, her thoughts were more for those she loved than for herself, and her bitterest tears fell, thinking of the past and her parents; and of the future; and of the child that might hereafter be pointed at by the finger of scorn, and despised for its parents' sin. "Oh! my mother, my mother, will you, too, forsake me," shrieked the wretched woman, and in a paroxysm of wildest delirium, was Adèle Morecombe conveyed into the sick ward of the prison, there to be tended till sufficiently recovered to be able to undergo her examination.

And now we must leave her for awhile, and see what the rest of our people are about. Archibald Morecombe, under the assumed name of John Jones, is safely landed in America, having, not only eluded the pursuit of his creditors, but put a barrier between himself and his parents, who tried in vain to discover his retreat. Sir Peter then went to Mr. Watson to enquire of him, which he had delayed doing for various causes; first, he had been daily expecting to

hear from him about the scheme set on foot for emigrating, which the fathers had met and talked over, and which Sir Peter had left entirely in Mr. Watson's hands; secondly, Sir Peter naturally felt a reluctance to go to anyone and ask for tidings of his own son, but as time wore on he determined to smother his feelings and go. Enquiring if Mr. Watson were at home, the servant hesitated before giving a reply, and then said "He is at home, but I don't think can see you." Sir Peter looked puzzled, and enquired if he were particularly engaged, and he would call again, as he very much wished to see him. The man then asked him to come in, and he would go and deliver the message, and soon after returned, saying his master would be with him shortly. Sir Peter's small stock of patience was nearly exhausted, when the door slowly opened, and leaning on a stick, Mr. Watson feebly entered the room, and sinking on the first seat he came to, exclaimed "Well, Sir Peter, and what have you come to advise me to do? Our wretched children have brought disgrace and ruin upon our heads; not that I believe my poor girl is so much to blame, but it was your good-for-nothing, wretch of a son that drove her to it." And tears streamed down the miserable father's face.

Sir Peter sat staring at him, perfectly mute with astonishment, and it was some moments before he could give vent to his feelings in words. At last he rose, and approaching Mr. Watson, said "My poor friend, you are speaking most bitterly against my son, and too sadly, I fear, there is truth in your words; but believe me, they are utterly without meaning in my ears. I really know nothing of what you allude to, and in fact, am here to-day to ask you for any tidings you can give me of him, for I know nothing, neither have heard ought of his movements since that last day he was here, and I am being constantly annoyed by letters and demands from creditors sent me relating to him."

Mr. Watson, in a voice choked with emotion, then briefly related the fearful tale which had that morning reached him. The discovery of the forged cheque and subsequent arrest of his daughter, and total disappearance of her husband. Sir Peter listened with breathless attention, and as the narrator ceased, he clasped his hands, and looking up to heaven, exclaimed in the bitterness of his soul, "Oh! my God, and is it come to this! Archibald, Archibald, you have broken the heart of your father." When these two unhappy parents had somewhat recovered the first burst of grief, they manfully braced themselves to consider what could be done, and Sir Peter generously proposed to betake himself to London and see what measures could be resorted to for the release of the culprit.

"You see I can do nothing," sorrowfully breathed forth Mr. Watson, as he looked down on his weakened limbs, which year by year had increased in lameness, consequent on his accident. "My poor wife is nearly out of her mind, and so utterly prostrated by grief as to be unable to leave her room. I was just thinking of sending to you, but could not tell how you might receive the intelligence; in fact, I don't know what to do, and if only I can manage it, I think I *must* go off myself. Just then a servant entered the room with a telegram, which was hastily seized by the trembling hands of his master, who tearing it open, read the following cautiously worded sentence from Arthur MacDonald:—"I have seen all parties concerned in the transaction, and shall be with you to-morrow, and hope to report favourably." "Thank God, here is the friend we wanted," said Mr. Watson as he handed the telegram to Sir Peter, whose first observation on reading it showed the direction of his anxious thoughts. "Then he knows something of my wretched boy, as he says 'all parties,'" and with a sigh of relief he added, "I will go home at once and break the affair to

my wife. Poor thing, she will be ill able to bear it, for she has been much worse lately ; I must get my sister back again to nurse her, she got so much better then." And Sir Peter's parting that day with his old friend was a far more affectionate one than had been for a long time past : a mutual sorrow had softened the hearts of each, and they spoke of to-morrow's meeting with anxious hope for the tidings that Arthur might be able to bring them. And how had Arthur Mac Donald contrived to obtain the desired knowledge ? We must go back in our story and find out.

When Lilia left Nunshorton, in that hurried way, without being able to give the all-important answer to her lover's question, that unhappy individual turned in despair to his ever kind and sympathising aunt, and sought her soothing tenderness, even as he had been wont in all his early childhood's griefs. "Dear aunt, I am a perfect fool, and you will tell me so, but how could I help it. I know it was most stupid of me, I ought either to have spoken before or left it alone ; but the feeling came over me, and I could not help it."

"My dear boy, I can't blame you, I only wish we could have kept her longer, it certainly was rather hurried of you, I must confess ; but she is such a very very dear girl, that I fell quite in love with her myself only that very first day she came here." And the old lady smile was responded to by her nephew, who felt considerably relieved by the sympathy shewn him.

He immediately set to work to frame a letter to be sent to Lilia, and many a sheet was torn up ere the final satisfactory one was despatched ; and anxiously did he watch the arrival of each day's post until the answer was received, framed with all kindness ; but plainly shewing that whatever other feeling she might have for him, love was not one, and he bitterly blamed himself for having so prematurely asked for that, which to be worth possessing, must be given

with much thought and prayerful consideration, as well as the mutual esteem, sympathy, tastes and inclinations, which form the essentials of a lasting love. Were these points considered instead of mere fancy, beauty—or worse than all—wealth and position, oh! how many more happy marriages would there be in the world—how many more souls trained for a blessed eternity. What would poverty or wordly sorrow be to those who “loved in CHRIST,” and were ever found “waiting for their Lord,” when He should come to take them to dwell in the regions of everlasting love for ever?

CHAPTER XVII.

“He who does not act upon system, who has no settled method in his life, has no standard of self-regulation beyond those obvious points which involve questions of duties to others; too often will he fail even in these, from the very waywardness of mood unused to self-control.”—SHIRROFF ON INTELLECTUAL EDUCATION.

As Arthur read again and again the letter that had at first seemed to crush out all hope, he began to fancy he discovered some slight veins of the precious ore, cropping out from what had at first appeared but a bare and desolate rock. Yes, there were expressions of such true esteem, and well-grounded friendship, that might surely with time, patience, and above all, opportunity, be encouraged to grow on into the truest love, because rooted in the richest soil. They would, through aunt Rhoda, hear constantly of each other, and Arthur had trust enough in the Almighty Disposer of all things to rest satisfied that if it were

His will, he might yet live to call Lilia Bertram his own. With these feelings he returned to his work in London, and happening one day to be at his banker's, he was startled by hearing a voice he thought he recognised, and looking round saw Mrs. Archibald Morecombe in earnest conversation with one of the clerks, who seemed demurring about some payment she was requiring. Fearing lest he might overhear anything intended to be private he at once advanced and accosted her, and spoke of the time when they met at the pretty little shooting box that her husband had hired the previous season. The talk was but the common conversation of any two persons meeting in public; but when Archibald enquired where she was now living, saying he should be so happy to call, she replied, in a voice she intended the clerk to hear, that they were just changing their house, but that she would shortly be at Morecombe Park again. The clerk heard the words and he also saw the friendly manner in which Mr. MacDonald had addressed her, and he mentally commented upon both facts, and the consequence was that he demurred no longer, but upon Mr. MacDonald's leaving, he at once changed the cheque for Mrs. Morecombe and politely wished her "Good Morning." Judge then the unhappy clerk's surprise when making up the accounts at the end of the month, to receive a note from Mr. Watson respecting the very sum of money that he had paid away to the daughter! His first thought was to seek out Mr. MacDonald, and find, if possible, from him where Mrs. Morecombe was, and to try and unravel the mystery of the twice demanded money.

"There must be some mistake," exclaimed Arthur. "Delay, if possible, your answer to Mr. Watson, and let us first see Mrs. Morecombe and hear how it has arisen."

The clerk stood irresolute, and then said in a hesitating manner, "There are strange stories afloat of Mr.

Morecombe, and I can't help having my suspicions. I never did like that plan of lithographing peoples' signatures, and yet Mr. Watson's daughter had all the management of her father's affairs for so long, that I thought it was all right to let her have the money."

Some part of this speech was not thoroughly comprehended by Arthur, but a little conversation with his visitor soon explained it all, and the evil name which Archibald had raised up for himself, by his gambling propensities, had made him mistrusted by all; still his wife was held to be above suspicion, and yet now there were fearful appearances that she was implicated in this last fraud, for fraud it surely must be, since Mr. Watson evidently knew nothing of the abstraction of the money from the bank. After some further conversation the two parted, each promising to do all in their power to discover the truth from Mrs. Morecombe, and to inform each other of his success or failure at the earliest opportunity. Days past in a fruitless search by both parties, until the clerk wearied out and fearing to get into trouble himself, sought the advice of a friend, who advised the employment of a "detective," and that "detective," as we have already seen, was not long in tracing the fugitive, who Arthur had sought in vain. He had gladly seized upon the good excuse it gave him for writing to Mrs. Bertram to know if she could give him any clue to the whereabouts of her nephew; he had not written to Sir Peter because, as they both well knew, there was always a painful feeling in regard to their relations with each other, and he particularly wished to avoid at this time troubling him with enquiries respecting his son. This correspondence was satisfactory, solely as regarded the fact that it thus enabled Arthur to hear of Lilia, and he consequently continued it so long as he could invent any sufficiently plausible excuse; but as to eliciting any

knowledge of the whereabouts of the Morecombes, it utterly failed, and Arthur's only hope lay now in the success he trusted his coadjutor in the search might attain to. Seated disconsolately in his room, he was aroused by the entrance of young Mr. Langdon with an open letter in his hand, which he gave his friend to read, saying "Don't you think I ought to go off at once?"

Arthur read the letter, and then looking up, said "Certainly, I would, were I you. It seems your uncle, when conscious, asks for you, and doubtless, is now on his death-bed regretting the estrangement there has been between you."

"Yes, but my fear was lest it should look like intruding myself, and you see none of the family have written to me to say 'come;' it is only what the nurse repeats to the doctor, and *he* writes, thinking there may be something important on his mind."

"Go, by all means," replied Arthur, "and by the way, could you enquire what ships have left the docks lately, and if any list of passengers is kept. I can't help fancying the Morecombes have gone abroad."

Langdon sighed "What a sad story it all is. I will certainly do all I can." Mr. Langdon went to Liverpool, sought out the doctor, learnt his uncle was dying, but had frequently expressed a wish to see him during that day, so he immediately repaired to the house, but the closed shutter told he was too late, and he returned to the friendly doctor who had summoned him. To his enquiries respecting his uncle he was advised to see the nurse, adding "I think he talked more to her than anyone. You can easily find her by going to the nursing hospital and asking for Sister Anna; it was owing to her influence that he wished to see a clergyman, and I fancy died a very altered man from what he had lived." Accordingly Mr. Langdon went in search of the Sister Anna, and learnt she had just gone off to an accident case in the

town, so being directed to the spot, Mr. Langdon quickly adjourned to the lodging, where he found the sister engaged in her work of love. On being told she was wanted down stairs, she descended to the little sitting room, and soon gave the nephew an account of the last days of his uncle, which made his heart beat with thankfulness for the change that had taken place in the money-loving man. Mr. Langdon determined to wait for the funeral, and asked if he could be accommodated with a room at that house, soon found himself comfortably settled in the very room that some weeks since had been tenanted by the unhappy Adèle! So strangely do events in this chequered life of ours occur.

The next morning Mr. Langdon was summoned by his uncle's solicitor to hear the reading of the will, as all arrangements for the funeral were therein especially left to him to arrange, and the whole of the carefully amassed fortune was now bequeathed to him, with the sole mention of legacies to servants, and a gift of £100 to the nursing hospital. Mr. Langdon buried his face in his hands; overcome with this sudden announcement of unexpected wealth. Then came the thought of being at last able to realise a long cherished wish of his to rebuild his London church, and change its Christopher Wren look into one more fitting the service of Him, Who so minutely ordered and arranged the beauty of His own temple. The morning of the funeral came, and just as Mr. Langdon was about to leave the house, his landlady came to him with a troubled countenance, saying "Please Sir, you will be returning to Town this afternoon, and may be, you know a good deal about them parts. I wish you could help me to get this letter sent there, to a poor dear lady, who left here in sad trouble;" and after a long and minute account of her late lodger, she placed the letter before him, and he read, with an expression of irrepressible astonishment, the name

of Mrs. A. Morecombe in her husband's handwriting! The poor woman's delight at thus unexpectedly meeting with a friend, was only too soon clouded over by the recollection of the sole address she could give for the letter to be re-directed, which she begged Mr. Langdon to do for her, she being as she said "No scholar."

"My kind friend," said he, "I will take it to her myself, and rest assured I will do all I can to comfort her and restore her to her friends."

It was late at night when Mr. Langdon reached London, and he knew he must wait for the morrow before he could be admitted to an interview with Adèle, but he at once sought Arthur and communicated the unlooked for discovery of her hiding-place. After talking over all that they thought best for the morrow's plans, Mr. Langdon said "And now, my dear Arthur, I must tell you of another subject of surprise; but this is one un-mixed with sorrow, save that I was not in time to see my uncle alive." And he then related all concerning the will, and ended with "Now we can build our new church, and make it a memorial one of my uncle." And the two sat up late and talked over plans; and the hearts that had so often sorrowed together at their incapability of carrying out their wishes, now rejoiced over the anticipated realization of their long cherished hope. The next day the two set out together to find the unhappy inmate of the prison, and after some difficulty obtained an order for their admittance; but the nurse hesitated, saying her patient was still so weak and in such a precarious state that she feared to allow more than one visitor at a time, and Mr. Langdon immediately drew back, saying to his friend, "You are the better one to go in, knowing more of her;" so retiring to the turnkey's room he waited the return of Arthur. Passing through a court-yard he was ushered into the sick room where the sick woman lay, and with difficulty could he recognise in the pale and

suffering form before him, that once bright and animated girl he had known scarce a year ago. The nurse had fully prepared Adèle for a visitor, and her eager eyes were strained towards the door in the firm belief that her husband had returned to her, but on seeing Arthur she turned hastily away and hid her face from him. He advanced a few paces and then said "You are disappointed seeing me instead of the one you expected, but I have news of him for you. Look here! and as she turned towards him he handed her the letter, which she seized and read, brushing back the hot tears that fell from her eyes. Arthur withdrew to the window, and for some time refrained from taking any notice of Adèle, until she had sufficiently recovered from the surprise of his coming and the perusal of her husband's letter. He then quietly asked if there were anything he could do for her, and by degrees drew from her a slight sketch of her life during the last few months, and then promised to write to her husband for her, and to arrange, if possible, all her affairs. He said "And when all is done you will go back to your parents, will you not, and remain until"—he paused, for he felt he was about to name a time and event that in his inmost heart he felt would never be—and yet what else could he say, perhaps it was best to let her, in her present state, cling to some hope, so he added "until your husband's return."

Adèle was silent some time, and then said "I can never return home. They must hate me there."

"No! no!" quickly interposed Arthur, "Don't say that; I will go to them and tell them all, and arrange everything." He rose to take his leave, feeling his shyness beginning to creep over him, and not knowing what to say, for in the first burst of anxiety on her account he had forgotten himself, and, therefore, in a great measure, forgotten his shyness. When he could do good to another, that other was his only thought.

After some few words more he withdrew, and on relating his conversation to Mr. Langdon, the two agreed to exert all their influence to get a simple written statement of the case accepted, instead of Mrs. Morecombe being obliged to appear herself and undergo a personal examination. These two were men of action as well as thought, and ere the day closed they had had interviews with all who were of any use to further their project. One thing indeed had been proposed by the bankers, who were prosecutors of the case. It was, that if anyone would come forward to be surety for the re-payment of the money, the whole affair might be hushed up. The two young men looked anxiously into each other's face, and Arthur suddenly linking his arm into that of his friend, drew him out of the room, saying "I have it—it shall be done, if possible; there is only one doubt. Let us talk it over."

"One doubt?" asked Mr. Langdon, "I can't see a shadow of a doubt; it seems a plain duty before us. What made you hesitate?"

"This is what I mean" replied Arthur, scarce heeding the other's words, "the money is not actually mine to give away, or"

"My dear Arthur, what do you mean?" interrupted Mr. Langdon. "What is mine is yours, we have but one object in view."

"Mine is yours," echoed Arthur. "What do you mean? Now do listen to me. It always seems a horrid thing to anticipate, as it were, one's own father's death, that's what makes me hesitate, so I would rather hope, that being his only child he would give me in his lifetime some *largeish* share in the property, or let me sell some; any way not have to count on his death, that's what I don't like. Only you see, people would no doubt trust me, as being heir to a large estate, and so I could raise the sum and pay it as hush-money to these bankers, and settle it all."

The rare event of a smile passed over Mr. Langdon's gentle countenance, as he said "My plan is a far simpler one than your intricate and painful arrangement. There is my uncle's fortune just come to me, as it were on purpose, at this moment. Our church must stand over till the future, it is the present only we have to deal with."

He said the words with such a quiet determination of purpose in the tone, and without even a sigh of regret, that even Arthur, who knew him so well, was struck with astonishment and admiration, for so completely had he taught himself to deny self in every way, that not even a trace of sorrow was perceptible in his speech, and as Arthur grasped his hand, tears started to his eyes, and he exclaimed "My noble friend, it shall be as you say, for I well know it would give you more pain did I refuse, than accept, your generous self-denial."

"Hush, hush," whispered Mr. Langdon, "not such words, pray. What is it but simply putting the money to another purpose than the one we first thought of? and it is so much easier just to do the one thing plainly set before us, than to puzzle our brains as to what is best to be done."

The next day the whole affair was arranged, the bankers were satisfied, and it was soon said abroad that the whole thing had been a mistake. It was a nine days' wonder—the thing hushed up and soon to be forgotten. Not so by all, and certainly not by poor Adèle herself, who positively refused to return to her parents, saying she should only bring scorn and shame on them. In vain they wrote begging her to return, and were on the point of starting off to fetch her back, when a letter from Arthur delayed their journey. He had been consulting, as usual, his friend, and the latter had advised that at all events for the present, it would be as well for Mrs. Morecombe to remain away from the neighbourhood of Morecombe

Park. "After awhile we shall see how things turn out, our way will be made clear; but I can't see just yet that it would be a prudent move. I wish we knew of some lady who would take her for a while on a visit. I have been thinking she could go into a sisterhood, but there are objections to that, I know in her case, and besides it would not answer the purpose I have in view, that of restoring her to her proper position in life."

Arthur MacDonald coloured violently and looked down on the floor, at last he said "I think I know one. Mrs. Bertram I feel sure would."

"She is exactly the person," replied Mr. Langdon, there is no time to be lost about it. Will you go off at once and ask her? the distance is not great from London; if you can catch the next train you might be back here again to-night, the last train up would bring you. I will sit up for you here, and then we can see Mrs. Morecombe about it the first thing tomorrow morning, and you can take her down." He paused, and seeing Arthur hesitate, said "Is it too much for you to undertake, or do you object, or what?"

Arthur's cheeks betrayed the answer in some degree, but his friend was puzzled, as there was one event in his life untold to him, and guessed a little, but waited for the answer, which soon came in the affirmative, and ere many hours were gone Arthur again found himself in the presence of his beloved, feeling himself to be more shy, awkward, ugly, and unprepossessing than ever. Lilia felt for him, and in the kindness of her heart, tried her utmost to set him at his ease. The presence of the tender, motherly Mrs. Bertram soon effectually accomplished what her daughter began, and Arthur found himself perfectly happy seated between them and discussing the object of his visit. Both ladies entered warmly into his views and rendered them still more feasible, inasmuch as Mrs. Bertram informed him that she had that day

arranged to take a small house in London, whilst her own underwent some necessary repairs. "I was coming up to-morrow," she added, "and as it is a ready-furnished house there will be no preparation necessary. I will go myself to poor Mrs. Morecombe and beg her to become my visitor for a little while; I can write to her mother and give her quite good and sufficient reasons for all our plans, and Lilia will join me in a few days, so now, if you must return by the night train, come into the dining room with us and fortify yourself before you start." The time flew by and Arthur was off again, but the visit had aroused his dormant hopes, and the parting pressure of a soft hand thrilled through every vein, and made a joyous brightness, even to that dark and lonely journey.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"For if one heart in perfect sympathy
 Beat with another, answering love for love,
 Weak mortals, all entranced, on earth would lie,
 Nor listen to those purer strains above."—
 24TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

Weeks rolled on and Arthur continued a constant visitor at Mrs. Bertram's, until one day she asked him if he would undertake a journey for her, and said "You must start directly, for I wish you to be the first to carry the news to Morecombe Park of the birth of a grand-son. You must go to both houses, and bring me back word how the intelligence is received there; I have great hopes that it may be the means of doing much good, and causing real pleasure to my brother. I shall write to him by you, and trust

the little Peter may find favour in his eyes. As for the other grand-parents, they will be prepared for the news, and you may tell them that now soon I will let them have their daughter again, but I could not part with her before; I am so anxious, if possible, for baby's first visit to be to the Park. The Watsons are good sensible people, and have so kindly fallen in with all my wishes." Arthur thought it would be a hard matter for anyone not to agree with Mrs. Bertram, though he felt there was one subject on which he feared they might have a difference of opinion, if ever it came to the point, that he could again ask the daughter to leave the mother, they seemed so united, it would be almost cruel even to suggest such a separation.

Arthur went and found Sir Peter and Lady Morecombe both in a very failing condition, the latter had always had bad health, and really seemed now to be seriously ill. Sir Peter had never recovered the shock of his son's conduct, and a deep and settled grief was gradually undermining his health; but sorrow had greatly subdued him, and the constant intercourse which had of late been kept up with his sister was doing good work. Arthur's judicious manner in speaking of the Morecombes whenever he had the opportunity, had likewise had its good effect, and now that he was the bearer of the news of this family event, he was fully recompensed for all his trouble by perceiving that it gave more joy than they cared to confess, and when he left he was the bearer of an invitation to mother and child to come to Morecombe Park, as soon as they were able. Arthur then returned to the Watsons and told of the perfect success of his embassy, but Mrs. Watson at first jealously inveighed against her daughter going to the Park before she came to her; but her husband soon put things in a different light, and she saw the reasonableness of the arrangement, and comforted herself

with the reflection that the visit to the Park would be but a short one, and then she would have the two loved beings with her for a long—who could say how long—a time? It was quite wonderful how much interest Arthur took in that infant, how constantly he went to inquire after its health, and to assist Lilia in writing letters to its father about it; or else in some way or other, no one exactly knew in what, and when he had left, and poor Mrs. Bertram had to put so many couvettes and chair covers tidy, and would half maliciously say, what a tiresome person he was, and how much trouble he gave her, Lilia would begin to make some sort of an excuse for him, and a deeper colour come into her cheeks.

One day as Lilia was leaving the room with the baby in her arms, he bent over it, and printed an impassioned kiss on its fair cheek. Mrs. Morecombe who lay on the sofa near, looked up smilingly, and thought more highly of him than ever before; and then she thought of baby's far-off father, and sighing, wondered if ever it would be blessed by that parent's kiss. "Mr. MacDonald, said she, "you will not refuse to become my son's special guardian and take him under your care. I mean at the font as well as in all temporal matters. I know both his grandfathers have promised to stand for him, but I should like to look to you as his real and most true and trusted Godfather. I always think it foolish to have relations, and particularly old ones, to act in such capacities, and you would be just the *friend* we want, as the others will all be relatives, for in spite of of her being young, I must have cousin Lilia also." Cousin Lilia just then returned to the room, and the conversation continued on the all-important subject of the baby and then of the father, whose letters were but few and did not speak highly of his foreign prospects. The neglect and unkindness had deeply penetrated the poor wife's heart, but as her love had

been but a groundless passion, not rooted in any real affection, she did not feel his absence with that intense grief that under other circumstances might most naturally have been expected, and now the helpless infant claimed, and received, nearly all the love of that young mother's heart. Lilia, who so well knew what her cousin's character was, could perfectly sympathise with her, and though a sad and painful feeling, still she could but think, that in reality, Adèle was in more peace and comfort now, than in all the former days of her married life, when passion and excitement, and sorrow and suffering, had been so largely her lot. With a nervous beating heart did she prepare for the visit to the Park, but kind Mrs. Bertram would not let her alone encounter the ordeal, and she and Lilia accompanied her, and Arthur saw them off at the station, promising to follow in due time for the christening. And so Lilia again found herself at Morecombe, with another lover, and in very changed circumstances. How strange the contrast seemed; she could not help comparing the one with the other, and felt, that in spite of all his peculiarities, Arthur was, indeed, far, far more to be truly loved and trusted than her handsome fascinating cousin. All the past came forcibly before her—the tones, the look of Archibald as he had pleaded for her love, or striven to extort from it some unreasonable compliance with his wishes—and most truly and deeply did she feel for the poor victim, who now was suffering from the indulgence of a dream that once had been hers. Thus thinking, she leant her cheek upon her hand, and an unbidden tear fell on it. A sudden noise aroused her, for unlucky Arthur could not yet enter a room quite quietly, though he strove to be as gentle as he could in her presence. His quick eye soon saw that hastily brushed away tear, and coming up close to her, he said “Miss Bertram, what is your sorrow? Will you tell me? and let me share it—no, not share it, let me bear it all, if I can and may.”

Lilia smiled but did not reply, and her silence gave him that encouragement which had so often been checked by some quiet kind of indifferent answer, and which he was now dreading to hear, and therefore hurriedly continued "Miss Bertram—Lilia—do tell me what grieves you. I cannot endure to see you in sorrow, let me know it, and oh! do, do, let me share it and give you all the comfort in my power to bestow." As he spoke the last words he seized the hand and kissed away the tears that still fell, for Lilia's feelings had been deeply stirred, and she could not at once check the expression of them, though her lips again smiled, and she left her hand in the manly grasp that so willingly detained it. "Lilia, I do not ask for your love yet, I feel it is too presumptuous in me to breathe the wish; but give me hope—yes, just a little hope—do not utterly refuse me, and let me try by all, by any means you choose to impose, to, to, prove my devotion to you, and some day be rewarded by your love. Oh! Lilia, dearest Lilia, say that you will give it me some day, however distant. Will you? Will you? Only tell me *when*." And Lilia laid her other hand in his and whispered "Now." Claspings her passionately in his arms, all was forgotten in the joy of that moment, and strange to relate, Arthur never remembered to ask Lilia what was the cause of the tears that had hung like raindrops in the sunshine of her smile, and encircled his life with the bright rainbow of hope.

As soon as the quiet christening was over, Arthur went off to his father's to see and talk over his happiness, for he longed to tell all to his loved aunt Rhoda, and felt that no written words could convey all that those two could say to each other. Rarely does it occur than an engagement takes place which gives perfect satisfaction to all parties concerned, but this seemed, indeed, a favoured exception. Lord Borthwick was delighted, and exclaimed "Why boy,

this is the most sensible thing you have ever done in your life. I confess I have often feared you meant to turn into a monk, spend all your money in charitable vagaries, and let our name and title sink into oblivion." This speech was heard with mingled feelings by Arthur, who was glad of the expressions of pleasure in it, though somewhat grieved by the worldliness of the spirit that lay couched beneath them. But later in the day another violent attack of his old enemy, the gout, coming on, Lord Borthwick began to speak in more serious tones to his son, and even ventured to allude to the probable event of his own death in one of these attacks, and noticing the peculiar look of Arthur, he said "Yes, you may be surprised to hear me talk in this way, but your friend and his old father have by degrees, made even me, old sinner, as I am, begin to think differently on these matters. Death will come sooner or later, and then you will have all that has been mine, and will, no doubt, make a better use of it than I have. I know your wishes," he added with a smile, "about that old ruin. Well, we all have our fancies; but please promise me one thing, and that is, don't spend *everything* on it; remember my wishes, and always keep up the old name, and let my grandson, for I hope I may have one, now you have come to some senses, so mind and let my grandson have a house and estate befitting his rank and position in life. I said something of this sort to young Langdon, and *he* said (so you see it's all right) that we are all placed in our own nooks and corners, and have a duty to perform in them, and no right; yes, mark these words, no right to alter that state and leave an impoverished exchequer to our posterity." Arthur listened, and promised true obedience to his father's wishes; and well was it for both parties that such conversation had then taken place, for the present illness of Lord Borthwick proved his last. The gout flew to his stomach, and ere many days he breathed

his farewell breath in the arms of his son. Gently laying down the now peaceful body, Arthur turned to his weeping aunt and led her from the room, saying "Though he is gone, you have another yet left, whose chief aim in life will be to try and shew his gratitude to you for all your past care of him. You were my protector once, now it is my turn to be yours. Dear aunt we must never part." And faithfully did Arthur keep to the promise contained in these words—his aunt was ever his first thought, and although she would sometimes say "An old woman was not wanted in the house with a young couple," she was rarely allowed to finish her speech; a playful hand would be placed over her mouth and she would be told that Nunshorton would be no Nunshorton without her; the Nuns' "garden" could not thrive did it lose its old and cherished flower. And so aunt Rhoda stayed on, loved and loving to the end of her days, and was laid at last in peace, by her sister, in the old churchyard; but not before she had seen fully carried out the darling wish of her life, and the often talked of memorial window placed in the church, which was now beautifully restored and placed under the special care of young Mr. Langdon, and in the floral architecture, Arthur had recognised his stiff cape jessamine (which had long ago so innocently roused his jealousy).

The old and revered Mr. Langdon, unable to perform any longer his sacred duties, was still to be seen daily wheeled to the church by his dutiful and affectionate son, and the young Lord and Lady Borthwick were ever ready to assist his tottering steps, as well as their loved aunt Rhoda's, feeling it no less a pleasure than a duty, to help those who needed it. This indeed was the one leading feature in their whole existence. As it had long been that of Arthur Mac Donald's, taught by his true friend Mr. Langdon, so had he in his turn been teaching his wife the happy lesson, and when a sweet little maiden was given to

their care, the parents' first teaching was that too often neglected and forgotten one,—the one true end and object of life, "The Glory of God," and how can this be better shown forth, than by seeking *first* the kingdom of God, by placing the care of the soul above that of the body, and until this is done there can be no real happiness known on this earth, and all who have the care and training of youth, and teach not this lesson, are not shewing them the straight way and narrow gate, but are sinfully placing them in the broad road that leadeth to destruction, and woe, bitter, bitter woe, will everlastingly be theirs.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Les peuples ne grandissent pas seulement par la victoire, ils se forment et grandissent aussi par les revers."

CHARLES DE MARADE.

Individuals like nations, may gain more real and lasting good by the reverses of fortune, than by continued success, but then much will in this case depend upon the spirit in which such reverses are viewed. Adèle Morecombe had looked upon all her trials in a proper light, and chastened and subdued, was in truth a far happier woman, than in the bright days of her careless girlhood. It was not many months after the marriage of Lord Borthwick and Bertram, that Sir Peter Morecombe received a New York paper containing the account of the death of his son. There were no particulars mentioned, and by whom the paper was sent, was never known. Sir Peter had so long been accustomed to look upon his son as lost to him for ever, that the shock fell with less violence on

him than on Lady Morecombe, who had ever clung with a mother's tenderness to the hope that she might yet live to see him return, a reclaimed and altered man.

This annihilation of all her hopes, was too much for the feeble mind and body and giving herself up to her grief, she sunk into her grave a broken hearted woman. Mrs. Bertram tended and soothed her last moments, and strove to raise her thoughts to a higher and holier state of mind, but she was so constantly unconscious, that Mrs. Bertram could only hope her sister's life was at last ended in peaceful prayer. Sir Peter begged his sister not to quit him, and Mrs. Bertram immediately made her arrangements to leave the home she loved, and to accede to his wishes, and so the brother and sister spent the rest of their lives together.

Mr. and Mrs. Watson lived on, a quiet, and daily increasing more useful existence, learning in their old age, the lesson they had neglected in their youth.

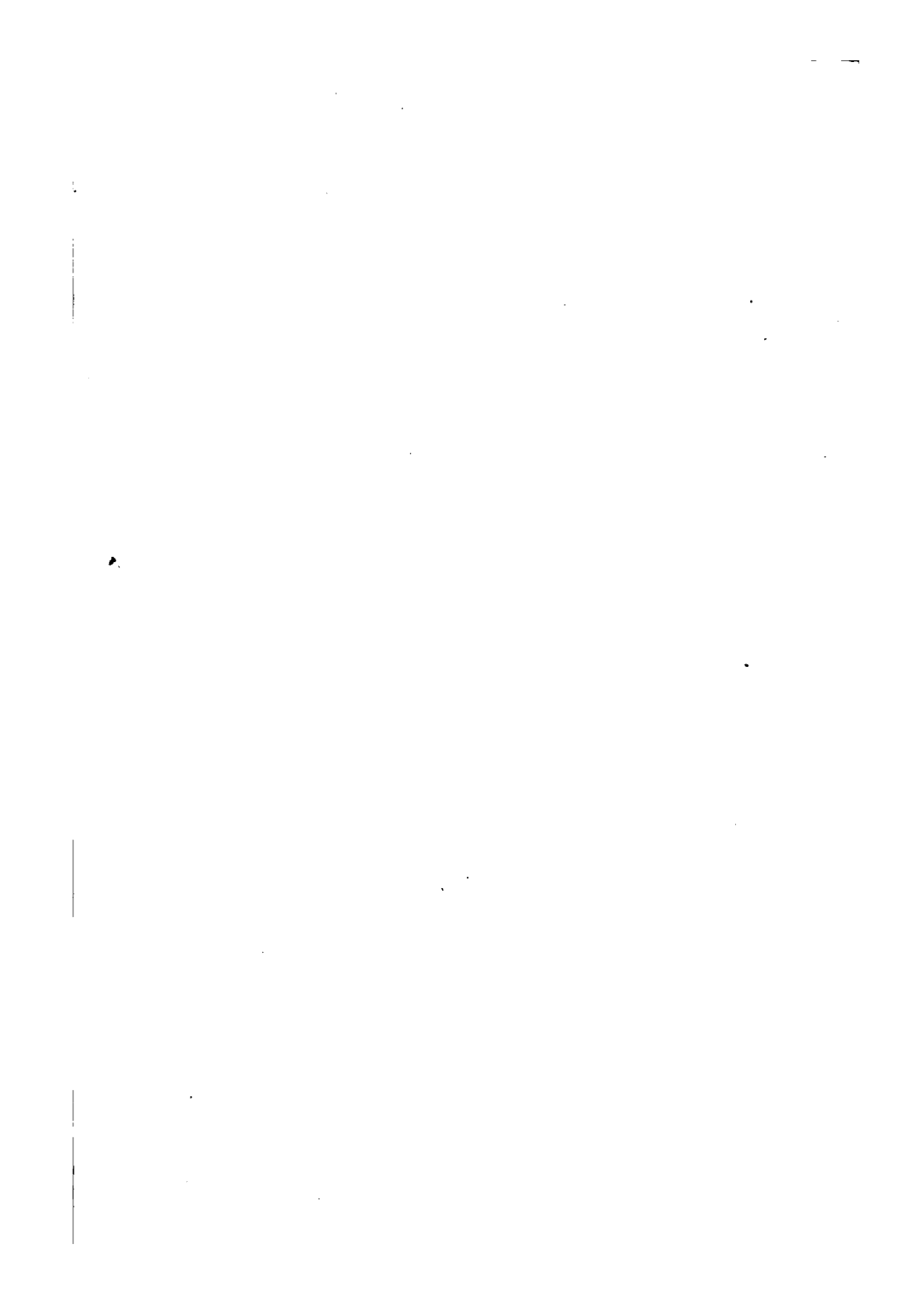
Adèle received the intelligence of her husband's death with composure. She could not hide from herself or others, that her love for him had by his own conduct, caused a sad estrangement from her, and the remembrance of his sin was a life long sorrow; she longed for some settled occupation, to divert her thoughts, and to enable her to devote her energies in some way that might render the end of her life more useful, than had the beginning of it been. She felt her boy would be better trained to be a good man at some public school, than left to her own guidance, and when that time came, she looked about for employment for herself, she had but to tell her wishes to her friends, and very soon was located in a sisterhood under the superintendence of Mr. Langdon, in London, and a few years after was asked by the Borthwicks to take the charge of their house for the sick and sorrowful, which the old ruin in their park had been converted

into, and to the support of which a large portion of their income was devoted.

Time passed on and a quietly happy group was often seen seated by those old walls or wandering about in that lovely park. Lord and Lady Borthwick, the loved of all who knew them, in earnest converse with that gentle looking widow, whose name of "Morecombe" was almost forgotten in the endearing one of "Mother," by which she was called by all the inmates of "Nun'shorton Home." Her young son would "be playing mad pranks along the healthy leas," with the little heiress of Nun'shorton Park, and as years passed on and on, and those two little ones grew into youth and maidenhood, there might then be seen "two lovers whispering," and at last, to the joy of their parents came the moment when those two young lives were "fast bound in one," and so runs

"The Round of Life."





the 1990s, the number of people in the world who are undernourished has increased from 250 million to 800 million. The number of people who are malnourished has increased from 1.2 billion to 2.2 billion. The number of people who are obese has increased from 100 million to 600 million. The number of people who are overweight has increased from 100 million to 600 million.

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